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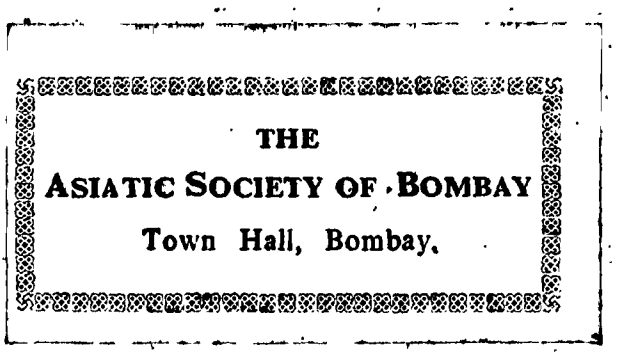

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THE NEW TIMON.

THE NEW TIMON

ST. STEPHEN'S

AND

THE LOST TALES OF MILETUS

BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
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1875

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE KNEBWORTH EDITION.

"THE NEW TIMON" marks as nearly as possible Lord Lytton's mid-career in authorship. It originally appeared anonymously in 1846, being issued from the press by Mr. Colburn in four parts, which were collected into a volume in 1847. More than a quarter of a century before —in 1820—Mr. Hatchard of Piccadilly had printed Edward Bulwer's first work, his boyish metrical tale of "Ismael." More than a quarter of a century after—in 1873—the pen fell from Lord Lytton's hand while he was yet writing his last work, his all but finished romance of "The Parisians."

The sketches of contemporary statesmen and orators which were incidentally given in the course of "The New Timon," probably first suggested to its author the idea which found full expression thirteen years afterwards in "St. Stephen's." The three divisions of that work originally appeared (like "The New Timon," and like so many other books from the same hand) quite anonymously at the beginning of 1860, in the January, February, and March numbers of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Prefixed to the first instalment was the following explanatory bracketed note:—

["In this Poem it is intended to give succinct sketches of our principal Parliamentary Orators, commencing with the origin of Parliamentary oratory (in the Civil Wars) and closing with the late Sir Robert Peel."]

As to "The Lost Tales of Miletus," Lord Lytton has

clearly enough indicated in the few pages of his preface to that work the curiously original design he therein proposed to realize. During the summer of 1865, these "Lost Tales of Miletus"—which were eventually published in 1866 by Mr. Murray—were privately and experimentally printed, the work in its then purely tentative form bearing upon its title-page the felicitous motto from Wordsworth:—

"Lone sitting by the shore of Old Romance."

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THE NEW TIMON.

I.

O'ER royal London, in luxuriant May,
While lamps yet twinkled, dawning crept the day.
Home from the hell the pale-eyed gamester steals;
Home from the ball flash jaded Beauty's wheels;
The lean grimalkin, who, since night began,
Hath hymn'd to love amidst the wrath of man,
Scared from his raptures by the morning star,
Flits finely by, and threads the area bar;
From fields suburban rolls the early cart;
As rests the revel, so awakes the mart.
Transfusing Mocha from the beans within,
Bright by the crossing gleams the alchemic tin,—
There halts the craftsman; there, with envious sigh,
The houseless vagrant looks, and limps foot-weary by.

Behold that street,—the Omphalos of Town!
Where the grim palace wears the prison's frown,
As mindful still, amidst a gaudier race,
Of the veil'd Genius of the mournful Place—
Of floors no majesty but Grief's had trod,
And weary limbs that only knelt to God.*

* Where now stands St. James's palace stood the hospital dedicated to St. James, for the reception of fourteen leprous maidens.

What tales, what morals, of the elder day—
If stones had language—could that street convey!
Why yell the human bloodhounds panting there?—
To drown the Stuart's last forgiving prayer.*
Again the bloodhounds!—whither would they run?
To lick the feet of Stuart's ribald son.
There, through the dusk-red towers, amidst his ring
Of Vans and Mynheers, rode the Dutchman king;
And there—did England's Goneril thrill to hear
The shouts that triumph'd o'er her crownless Lear?
There, where the gaslight streams on Crockford's door,
Bluff Henry chuckled at the jests of More;
There, where you gaze upon the last H.B.,
Swift paused, and mutter'd, "Shall I have that see?"
There, where yon pile, for party's common weal,
Knits votes that serve, with hearts abhorring, Peel,
Blunt Walpole seized, and roughly bought his man;—
Or, tired of Polly, St. John lounged to Anne.
Well, let the world change on,—still must endure
While Earth is Earth, one changeless race—the Poor!
Within that street, on yonder threshold stone,
What sits as stone-like?—Penury, claim thine own!
She sate, the homeless wanderer,—with calm eyes
Looking through tears, yet lifted to the skies;
Wistful, but patient, sorrowful, but mild,
As asking God when He would claim his child.
A face too youthful for so hush'd a grief;—
The worm that gnaw'd the core had spared the leaf;
Though worn the cheek, with hunger, or with care,
Yet still the soft fresh child-like bloom was there;

* Charles the First attended divine service in the Royal Chapel immediately before he walked through the park to his scaffold at Whitehall. In the palace of St. James's, Monk and Sir John Granville schemed for the restoration of Charles II.

And each might touch you with an equal gloom,
The youth, the care, the hunger, and the bloom;—
As if, when round the cradle of the child
With lavish gifts the gentler fairies smiled,
One vengeful sprite, forgotten as the guest,
Had breathed a spell to disenchant the rest,
And prove how slight each favour, else divine,
If wroth the Urganda of the Golden Mine!

Now as the houseless sate, and up the sky
Dawn to day strengthen'd, pass'd a stranger by:
He saw and halted;—she beheld him not—
All round them slept, and silence wrapt the spot.
To this new-comer Nature had denied
The gifts that graced the outcast crouch'd beside:
With orient suns his cheek was swarth and grim,
And low the form, though lightly shaped the limb;
Yet life glow'd vigorous in that deep-set eye,
With a calm force that dared you to defy;
And the strong foot was planted on the stone
Firm as a gnome's upon his mountain throne;
Simple his garb, yet what the wealthy wear,
And conscious power gave lordship to his air.

Lone in the Babel thus the maid and man;
Long he gazed silent, and at last began:
"Poor homeless outcast—dost thou see me stand
Close by thy side—yet beg not? Stretch thy hand."
The voice was stern, abrupt, yet full and deep:
The outcast heard, and started as from sleep,
And meekly rose, and stretch'd the hand, and sought
To murmur thanks—the murmur fail'd the thought.
He took the slight thin hand within his own:
"This hand hath nought of honest labour known;
And yet methinks thou'rt honest!—speak, my child."

And his face broke to beauty as it smiled.
But her unconscious eyes, cast down the while,
Met not the heart that open'd in the smile:
Again the murmur rose, and died in air.
"Nay, what thy mother and her home, and where?"
Lo, with those words the rigid ice that lay
Layer upon layer within, dissolves away,
And tears come rushing from o'erchargèd eyes:—
"There is my mother—there her home—the skies!"
Oh, in that burst, what depth of lone distress!
O desolation of the motherless!
Yet through the anguish how survived the trust,
Home in the skies, though in the grave the dust!
The man was moved, and silence fell again;
Upsprung the sun—Light re-assumed the reign;—
Love ruled on high! Below, the twain that share
Men's builded empires—Mammon and Despair!

At length, with pitying eye and soothing tone,
The stranger spoke: "Thy bitterer grief mine own;
Amidst the million, lonely as thou art,
Mine the full coffers, but the beggar'd heart.
Yet Gold—earth's demon, when unshared, receives
God's breath, and grows a God, when it relieves.
Trust still our common Father, orphan one,
And He shall guide thee, if thou trust the son.
Nay, follow, child." And on with passive feet,
Ghost-like, she follow'd through the death-like street.
They paused at last a stately pile before;
The drowsy porter oped the noiseless door;
The girl stood wistful still without;—the pause
The guide divined, and thus rebuked the cause:—
"Enter, no tempter let thy penury fear;
I have a sister, and her home is here."

II.

'And who the wanderer that hath shelter won
Beneath the roof of Fortune's favour'd son?
Ill stars predoom'd her, and she stole to birth
Fresh from the Heaven,—Law's outcast on the earth;
The child of Love betraying and betray'd,
The blossom open'd in the Upas shade;—
So ran the rumour; if the rumour lied,
The humble mother wept, but not denied:
Ne'er had the infant's slumber known a rest
On childhood's native shield—a father's breast.
Dead or neglectful, 'twas to her the same;
But, oh, how dear!—yea, dearer for the shame,
All that God hallows in a mother's name!
Here, one proud refuge from a world's disdain,
Here the lost empress half resumes her reign;—
Here the deep-fallen Eve sees Eden's skies
Smile on the desert from the cherub's eyes.
Sweet to each human heart the right to love;
But 'tis the deluge consecrates the dove;
And haply scorn yet more the child endears,
Cradled in misery, and baptized with tears.

Each then the all on earth unto the other,—
The sinless infant and the erring mother:
The one soon lost the smile which childhood wears,
Chill'd by the gloom it marvels at—but shares;
The other, by that purest love made pure,
Learn'd to redeem, by labouring to endure;
Who can divine what hidden music lies
In the frail reed, till winds awake its sighs?

Hard was their life, and lonely was their hearth;
There, kindness brought no holiday of mirth;

No kindred visited, no playmate came;—
Joy, the proud worldling, shunn'd the child of shame!
Yet in the lesson which, at stolen whiles,
'Twixt care and care, the respite-hour beguiles,
The mother's mind the polish'd trace betrays
Of early culture and serener days;
And gentle birth still moulds the delicate phrase.
By converse, more than books (for books too poor),
Learn'd Lucy more than books themselves ensure;
For if, in truth, the mother's heart had err'd,
Pure now the life, and holy was the word:
The fallen state no grov'ling change had wrought;
Meek if the bearing, lofty was the thought;
So much of noble in the lore instill'd,
You felt the soul had ne'er the error will'd;—
That fraud alone had duped its wings astray
From their true instinct tow'rds empyreal day.
Thus life itself, if sadd'ning, still refined,
And through the heart the culture reach'd the mind.
As to the moon the tides attracted move,
So flow'd the intellect beneath the love.—
To nurse the sickness, to assuage the care,
To charm the sigh into the happier prayer;
Forestall the unutter'd wish with ready guess;
Wise in the exquisite tact of tenderness!
These Lucy's study;—and, in grateful looks,
Seraphs write lessons more divine than books.

So dawn'd her youth:—Youth, Nature's holiday!
Fair time, which dreams so gently steal away;
When Life—Dark Volume, with its opening leaf
Of joy,—through fable dupes us into grief—
Tells of a golden Arcady;—and then
Read on,—comes truth;—the Iron world of men!

But from her life thy opening poet page
Was torn!—its record had no Golden Age.

Behold her by the couch, on bended knees!
There the wan mother—there the last disease!
Dread to the poor the least suspense of health,—
Their hands their friends,—their labour all their wealth:
Let the wheel rest from toil a single sun,
And all the humble clock-work is undone.
The custom lost, the drain upon the hoard,
The debt that sweeps the fragment from the board,
How mark the hunger round thee, and be brave—
Foresee thy orphan, and not fear the grave?
Lower and ever lower in the grade
Of penury fell the mother and the maid,
Till the grim close; when, as the midnight rain
Drove to the pallet through the broken pane,
The dying murmur'd: "Near,—thy hand,—more near!
I am not what scorn deem'd,—yet not severe
The doom which leaves me, in the hour of death
The right to bless thee with my parting breath—
These, worn till now, wear thou, his daughter. Live
To see thy sire, and tell him—I forgive!"
Cold the child thrills beneath the hands that press
Her bended neck—slow slackens the caress—
Loud the roof rattles with the stormy gust;
The grief is silent, and the love is dust;
From the spent fuel God's bright spark is flown;
And there the Motherless, and Death—alone!

Then fell a happy darkness o'er the mind;—
That trance, that pause, the tempest leaves behind:
Still, with a timid step, around she crept,
And sigh'd "she sleeps!" and smiled. Too well she slept!

Dark strangers enter'd in the squalid cell;
Rude hirelings placed the pauper in the shell;
Harsh voices question'd of the name and age;
Ev'n paupers live upon the parish page.
She answers not, or sighs, and smiles, and keeps
The same meek language:—"Hush! my mother sleeps."
They thrust some scanty pence into her palm,
And led her forth, scarce marv'ling at her calm;
And bade her work, not beg—be good, and shun
All bad companions—so their work was done,
And the wreck left to drift amidst the roar
Of the Great Ocean with the rocky shore.

And thou hast found the shelter!—from thine eyes
Melt the long shadows. Dawn is in the skies.
Low on the earth, while Night endures,—unguess'd
Hope folds the wing and slumbers on its nest;
Let but a sunbeam to the world be given—
And hark—it singeth at the gates of Heaven!

III.

Yet o'er that house there hung a solemn gloom;
The step fell timid in each gorgeous room,
Vast, sumptuous, dreary as some Eastern pile,
Where mutes keep watch—a home without a smile;
Still as if silence reign'd there, like a law,
And left to pomp no attribute but awe;
Save when the swell of sombre festival
Jarr'd into joy the melancholy hall,
So some chance wind in mournful autumn wrings
Discordant notes, although from music-strings.
Wild were the wealthy master's moods and strange;
As one whose humour found its food in change,

Now for whole days content apart to dwell
With books and thought—his world the student's cell;
And now, with guests around the glittering board,
The hermit-Timon shone the Athenian lord.
There bloom'd the bright ephemerals of the hour,
Whom the fierce ferment forces into flower,
The gorgeous nurslings of the social life,
Sprung from our hotbeds—Vanity and Strife!
Lords of the senate, wrestlers for the state,
Grey-hair'd in youth, exhausted, worn,—and great;
Pale Book-men,—charming only in their style;
And Poets, jaundiced with eternal bile;—
All the poor Titans our Cocytus claims,
With tortured livers, and immortal names:—
Such made the guests, Amphitryons well may boast,
But still the student travail'd in the host;—
These were the living books he loved to read,
Keys to his lore, and comments on his creed.
From them he rose with more confirm'd disdain
Of the thorn-chaplet and the gilded chain.
Oft, from such stately revels, to the shed
Where Hunger couch'd, the same dark impulse led;
Intent, the Babel, Art has built, to trace,
Here scan the height, and there explore the base;
That structure call'd "The Civilized," as vain
As its old symbol on the Shinar plain,
Where Pride collects the bricks and slime, and then
But builds the city to divide the men;
Swift comes the antique curse,—smites one from one,
Rends the great bond, and leaves the pile undone.

Man will *o'er muse*—when musing on mankind:
The vast expanse defeats the searching mind,
Blent in one mass each varying height and hue:—
Wouldst thou seize Nature, Artist—bound the view!

But He, in truth, is banish'd from the ties
That curb the ardent, and content the wise;
From the pent heart the bubbling passions sweep,
To spread in aimless circles o'er the deep.

Still in extremes—in each was still betray'd
A soul at discord with the part it play'd;
A soul in social elements misplaced,
Bruised by the grate and yearning for the waste,
And wearing custom, as a pard the chain,
Now with dull torpor, now with fierce disdain.

All who approached him by that spell were bound,
Which nobler natures weave themselves around:
Those stars which make their own charm'd atmosphere;
Not wholly love, but yet more love than fear,
A mystic influence, which, we know not why,
Makes some on earth seem portions of our sky.

In truth, our Morvale (such his name) could boast,
Those kinglier virtues which subject us most;
The ear inclined to every voice of grief,
The hand that oped spontaneous to relief,
The heart, whose impulse stay'd not for the mind
To freeze to doubt what charity enjoin'd,
But sprang to man's warm instinct for mankind;
Honour, truth's life-sap, with pervading power
Nurturing the stem to crown it with the flower;
And that true daring not alone to those
Whom fault or fate has marshall'd into foes;
But the rare valour that confronts with scorn
The monster shape, of Vice and Folly born,
Which some "the World," and some "Opinion," call,
Own'd by no heart, and yet enslaving all;

The bastard charter of the social state,
Which crowns the base to ostracize the great;
The eternal quack upon the itinerant stage,
This the "good Public," that "the enlighten'd Age,"
Ready alike to worship and revile,
To build the altar, or to light the pile;
Now "Down with Stuart and the Reign of Sin,"
Now "Long live Charles the Second and Nell Gwynne;"
Now mad for patriots—hot for revolution,
Now all for hanging and the Constitution.
Honour to him, who, self-complete, if lone,
Carves to the grave one pathway all his own;
And, heeding nought that men may think or say,
Asks but his soul if doubtful of the way

IV.

Such was the better nature Morvale show'd;
Now view the contrast which the worse bestow'd.
Large was his learning, yet so vague and mix'd
It guided less the reason than unfix'd;
The dauntless impulse and the kingly will,
Prompted to good, but leapt the checks to ill;
Quick in revenge, and passionately proud,
His brightest hour still shone forth from a cloud,
And none conjecture on the next could form—
So play'd the sunbeam on the verge of storm.

Still young—not youthful—life had pass'd through all
Age sighs, and smiles, and trembles to recall.
From childhood fatherless and lone begun
His fiery race, beneath as fierce a sun,
Where all extremes of Love and Horror are,
Soft Camdeo's lotos bark, grim Moloch's gory car;
Where basks the noonday luminously calm,
O'er eldest grot and immemorial palm;

And in the grot, the Goddess of the Dead
And the couch'd strangler, list the wanderer's tread,
And where the palm leaves stir with breeze-like sigh,
Sports the fell serpent with his deathful eye.

Midst the exuberant life of that fierce zone,
Uncurb'd, self-will'd, to man had Morvale grown.
His sire (the offspring of an Indian maid
And English chief,) whose orient hues betrayed
The Varna Sankara * of the mix'd embrace.
Carved by his sword a charter from disgrace;
Assumed the father's name, the Christian's life,
And his sins cursed him with an English wife:
A haughty dame, whose discontented charms
That merchant, Hymen, bargain'd to his arms.
In war he fell: his wife—the bondage o'er,
Loath'd the dark pledge the abhorrèd nuptials bore—
Yet young, her face more genial wedlock won,
And one bright daughter made more loath'd the son.
Widowed anew, for London's native air,
And two tall footmen, sigh'd the jointured fair:
Wealth hers, why longer from its use exiled?—
She fled the land and the abandon'd child;
Yet oft the first-born, 'midst the swarthier race,
Gazed round and miss'd the fair unloving face.
In vain the coldness, nay, the hate had been,
Hate, by the eyes that love, is rarely seen.

Yet more he miss'd the playmate, sister, child,
With looks that ever on his own had smiled;
With rosy lips, caressing and caress'd;
Led by his hand and cradled on his breast:

* The Sanscrit term, denoting the mixture or confusion of classes; applied to that large portion of the Indian population excluded from the four pure castes.

But, as the cloud conceals and breaks in flame,
The gloom of youth the fire of man became.
Not his the dreams that studious life allows,
"Under the shade of melancholy boughs,"—
Dreams that to lids the Muse anoints belong,—
Rocking the passions on soft waves of song:
No poet he; adventure, wandering, strife,
War and the chase, wrung poetry from life.

One day a man who call'd his father "friend,"
Told o'er his rupees and perceived his end.
Life's business done—a million made—what still
Remain'd on earth? Wealth's last caprice—a Will!
The man was childless—but the world was wide;
He thought on Morvale, made his will,—and died.
They sought and found the unsuspecting heir
Crouch'd in the shade that near'd the tiger's lair;
His gun beside, the jungle round him—wild,
Lawless and fierce as Hagar's wandering child:—
To this fresh nature the sleek life deceased
Left the bright plunder of the ravaged East.

Much wealth brings want,—that hunger of the heart
Which comes when Nature man deserts for Art:
His northern blood, his English name, create
Strife in the soul, till then resign'd to fate;
The social world with blander falsehood graced,
Smiles on his hopes, and lures him from the waste.
Alas! the taint that sun-burnt brow bespeaks,
Divides the Half-Caste from the world he seeks:
In him proud Europe sees the Paria's birth,
And haughty Juno spurns his barren hearth.
Half heathen, and half savage,—all estranged
Amidst his kind, the Ishmael roved unchanged.

Small need to track his course from year to year,
Till wearied passion paused in its career:
Youth goads us on to action; law of men
Brings thought—thought books—books quiet; well,
and then?
Alas! we move but in the Hebrews' ring;*
Our ónward steps but back the landmarks bring,
Until some few at least escape the thrall,
And breathe the space beyond the flaming wall:
Feel the large freedom which in faith is given,
And poise the wings that shall possess the heaven.

He sought his mother. She, intent to shun,
Closed that last refuge on the homeless son,
Till Death approach'd, and Conscience, that sad star,
Which heralds night, and plays but on the bar
Of the Eternal Gate,—laid bare the crime,
And woke the soul upon the brink of time.
Haply if close, too closely, we would read
That sibyl page, the motive of the deed,
Remorse for him her life abandon'd, weaves
Fear for the dearer one her death bereaves;
And penitent lines consign'd, with eager prayer,
The lorn Calantha to a brother's care.
Not till long moons had waned in distant skies,
O'er the last mandate wept the Indian's eyes;
But the lost sister lived, the flower of yore
Bloom'd from the grave,—and earth was sweet once
more;
Fair Florence holds the heart he yearns to meet;
Swift, when heart yearns to heart, how swift the feet!

* According to Eastern commentators, the march of the Israelites in the Desert was in a charmed circle; every morning they set out on their journey, and every night found themselves on the same spot as that from which the journey had commenced.

Well, and those arms have clasp'd a sister now!
Thy tears have fallen on a sister's brow!
Alas! a sister's heart thy doom forbade;
Thy lot as lonely, and thy hearth as sad.
Is that pale shade the Peri-child in truth,
Who shone, like Morning, on the hills of Youth?
Is that cold voice the same that rang through air,
Blithe as the bird sings in rebuke of care?

Certes, to those who might more closely mark,
That dove brought nought of gladness to his ark;
No loving step, to meet him homeward, flew;
Still at his voice her pale cheek paler grew.
The greeting kiss, the tender trustful talk,—
Arm link'd in arm—the dear familiar walk;
The sweet domestic interchange of cares,
Memories and hopes—this union was not theirs.
Partly perchance the jealous laws that guard
The Eastern maids, their equal commune barr'd;
For still, in much the antique creed retain'd
Its hold, and India in the Alien reign'd:
That superstitious love which would secure
What the heart worships, for the world too pure;
And wrap with solemn mystery and divine,
From the crowd's gaze, the idol and the shrine,
In him was instinct,—generous if austere;
More priestly reverence, than dishonouring fear.
Yet wherefore shun no less, if this were all,
His lonely chamber than his crowded hall?
For days, for weeks, perchance, unseen, aloof
Far as the poles, beneath one common roof,
She drew around her the cold spells, which part
From forward sympathies the unsocial heart.
Yet, strange to say, each seem'd to each still dear;
And love in her but curb'd by stronger fear;

And love in him by some mysterious pride,
That sought the natural tenderness to hide:
Did she but name him, you beheld her raise
Moist eyes to heaven, as one who inly prays.
News of her varying health he daily sought,
And his mood alter'd with the tidings brought:
If worse than wonted, it was sad to view
That stern man's trembling lip and waning hue,—
Sad, yet the sadness with an awe was blent,—
No words e'er gave the struggling passion vent;
And still that passion seem'd not grief alone,
Some curse seem'd labouring in the stifled groan:
Some angrier chord the mix'd emotion wrench'd;
The brow was darken'd, and the hand was clench'd.

There was a mystery that defied the guess,
In so much love, and so much tenderness.
What sword, invisible to human eyes,
So sternly sever'd Nature's closest ties:
To leave each yearning unto each—apart—
All ice the commune, and all warmth the heart?

V.

But how gain'd she, whom pity strange and rare
Gave the night's refuge,—more than refuge there?
At morn the orphan hostess had received
The orphan outcast,—heard her and believed,—
And Lucy wept her thanks, and turn'd to part;
But the sad tale had touch'd a woman's heart.
Calantha's youth was lone, her nature kind,
She knew no friend—she sigh'd a friend to find;
That chasten'd speech, the grace so simply worn,
Bespoke the nurture of the gentle-born;

And so she gazed upon the weeping guest,
Check'd the intended alms, and murmur'd "Rest,"
For both are orphans,—I should shelter thee,
And, weep no more—thy smile shall comfort me.

Thus Lucy rested—finding day by day
Her grateful heart the saving hand repay.
Calantha loved her as the sad alone
Love what consoles them;—in that life her own
Seem'd to revive, and even hope to flower:
Ah, over Sorrow, Youth has such sweet power!
The very menials linger'd as they went,
To spy the fairy to their dwelling sent,
To list her light step on the stair, or hark
Her song;—yes, *now* the dove was in the ark!
Ev'n the cold Morvale, spell'd at last, was found
Within the circle drawn his guest around;
Less rare his visits to Calantha grew,
And her eye shrunk less coldly from his view;
The presence of the gentle third one, brought
Respite to memory, gave fresh play to thought;
And as some child to strifeful parents sent,
Laps the long discord in its own content,
This happy creature seem'd to reach that home,
To say—"Love enters where the guileless come!"
It was not mirth, for mirth she was too still;
It was not wit, wit leaves the heart more chill;
But that continuous sweetness, which with ease
Pleases all round it, from the wish to please,—
This was the charm that Lucy's smile bestow'd;
The waves' fresh ripple from deep fountains flow'd;—
Below exhaustless gratitude,—above,
Woman's meek temper, childhood's ready love.

Yet oft, when night reprieved the tender care,
And lonely thought stole musing on to prayer;
As some fair lake reflects, when day is o'er,
With clearer wave from farther glades the shore,
So, her still heart remember'd sorrows glass'd;
And o'er its hush lay trembling all the past,
Again she sees her mother's gentle face;
Again she feels a mother's soft embrace;
Again a mother's sigh of pain she hears,
And starts—till lo, the spell dissolves in tears!
Tears that too well the faithful grief reveal,
Which smiles, by day made duties, would conceal.

VI.

It was a noon of summer in its glow,
And all was life, but London's life, below;
As by the open casement half reclined
Calantha's languid form;—a gentle wind
Brought to her cheek a bloom unwonted there,
And stirr'd the light wave of the golden hair.
Hers was a beauty that made sad the eye,
Lovely in fading, like a twilight sky;
The shape so finely, delicately frail,
As form'd for climes unruffled by a gale;
The lustrous eye, through which looks forth the soul,
Bright and more brightly as it nears the goal;
The fever'd counterfeit of healthful bloom,
The rose so living yet so near the tomb;
The veil the Funeral Genius lends his bride,
When, fair as Love, he steals her to his side,
And leads her on till at the nuptial porch,
He murmurs, "Know me now!" and lowers the torch.
What made more sad the outward form's decay,
A soul of genius glimmer'd through the clay;

Oft through the languor of disease would break
That life of light Parnassian dreamers seek;
And music trembled on each aspen leaf
Of the boughs drooping o'er the fount of grief.

Genius has so much youth no care can kill;
Death seems unnatural when it sighs—"Be still."
That wealth, which Nature prodigally gave,
Shall Life but garner for its heir the Grave?
What noble hearts that treasure might have bless'd!
How large the realm that mind should have possess'd!
Love in the wife, and wisdom in the friend,
And earnest purpose for a generous end,
And glowing sympathy for thoughts of power
And playful fancy for the lighter hour;
All lost, all cavern'd in the sunless gloom
Of some dark memory, beetling o'er the tomb;—
Like bright-wing'd fairies, whom the hostile gnome
Has spell'd and dungeon'd in his rocky home,
The wanderer hears the solitary moan,
Nor dreams the fairy in the sullen stone.

Contrasting this worn frame and weary breast,
Fresh as a morn of April bloom'd the guest:
April has tears, and mists the morn array;
The mists foretell the sun,—the tears the May.
Lo, as from care to care the soother glides,
How the home brightens where the heart presides!
Now hovering, bird-like, o'er the flowers,—at times
Pausing to chant Calantha's favourite rhymes,
Or smooth the uneasy pillow with light hand;
Or watch the eye, forestalling the demand,
Complete in every heavenly art—above
All, save the genius of inventive love.

The window open'd on that breadth of green,
To half the pomp of older days the scene.
Gaze to thy left—there the Plantagenet
Look'd on the lists for Norman knighthood set;*
Bright issued forth, where yonder archway glooms,
Banner and trump, and steed, and waves of plumes,
As with light heart rides wanton Anne to brave
Tudor's grim love, the purple and the grave.
Gaze to the right, where now—neat, white, and low,
The modest Palace looks like Brunswick Row;†
There, echoed once the merriest orgies known,
Since the frank Norman won grave Harold's throne;
There, bloom'd the mulberry groves, beneath whose shade
His easy loves the royal Rowley made;
Where Villiers flaunted, and where Sedley sung,
And wit's loose diamonds dropp'd from Wilmot's tongue!
All at rest now—all dust!—wave flows on wave;
But the sea dries not!—what to us the grave?
It brings no real homily, we sigh,
Pause for awhile and murmur, "all must die!"
Then rush to pleasure, action, sin once more,
Swell the loud tide, and fret unto the shore.

And o'er the alter'd scene Calantha's eye
Roves listless—yet Time's Great the passers by!
Along the road still fleet the men whose names
Live in the talk the moment's glory claims.
There, for the hot Pancratia of Debate
Pass the keen wrestlers for that palm,—the State.
Now, "on his humble but his faithful steed,"
Sir Robert rides—he never rides at speed—

* The Tilt-yard.

† Since this was written, to Buckinghom Palace has been prefixed a front which is not without merit—in thrusting out of sight the other three sides of the building.

Careful his seat, and circumspect his gaze;
And still the cautious trot the cautious mind betrays.
Wise is thy heed!—how stout soe'er his back,
Thy weight has oft proved fatal to thy hack! *
Next, with loose rein and careless canter view
Our man of men, the Prince of Waterloo;
O'er the firm brow the hat as firmly press'd,
The firm shape rigid in the button'd vest;
Within—the iron which the fire has proved,
And the close Sparta of a mind unmoved!

Not his the wealth to some large natures lent,
Divinely lavish, even where misspent,
That liberal sunshine of exuberant soul,
Thought, sense, affection, warming up the whole;
The heat and affluence of a genial power,
Rank in the weed as vivid in the flower;
Hush'd at command his veriest passions halt,
Drill'd is each virtue, disciplined each fault;
Warm if his blood—he reasons while he glows,
Admits the pleasure—ne'er the folly knows;
If Vulcan for our Mars a snare had set,
He had won the Venus, but escaped the net;
His eye ne'er wrong, if circumscribed the sight,
Widen the prospect and it ne'er is right,
Seen through the telescope of habit still,
States seem a camp, and all the world—a drill!

* The reader need scarcely be reminded, that these lines were written years before the fatal accident which terminated an illustrious life. If the lines be so inadequate to the subject, the author must state freely that he had the misfortune to differ entirely from the policy pursued by Sir Robert Peel at the time they were written; while if that difference forbade panegyric, his respect for the man checked the freedom of satire. The author will find another occasion to attempt, so far as his opinions on the one hand, and his reverence on the other, will permit—to convey a juster idea of Sir Robert Peel's defects or merits, perhaps as a statesman, at least as an orator.

Yet oh, how few his faults, how pure his mind,
Beside his fellow-conquerors of mankind;
How knightly seems the iron image, shown
By Marlborough's tomb, or lost Napoleon's throne!
Cold if his lips, no smile of fraud they wear,
Stern if his heart, still "Man" is graven there;
No guile—no crime his step to greatness made,
No freedom trampled, and no trust betray'd;
The eternal "I" was not his law—he rose
Without one art that honour might oppose,
And leaves a human, if a hero's, name,
To curb ambition while it lights to fame.

But who, scarce less by every gazer eyed,
Walks yonder, swinging with a stalwart stride?
With that vast bulk of chest and limb assign'd
So oft to men who subjugate their kind;
So sturdy Cromwell push'd broad-shoulder'd on;
So burly Luther breasted Babylon;
So brawny Cleon bawl'd his Agora down;
And large-limb'd Mahmoud clutch'd a Prophet's crown!

Ay, mark him well! the schemer's subtle eye,
The stage-mimc's plastic lip your search defy—
He, like Lysander, never deems it sin
To eke the lion's with the fox's skin;
Vain every mesh this Proteus to enthrall,
He breaks no statute, and he creeps through all;—
First to the mass that valiant truth to tell,
"Rebellion's art is never to rebel,—
Elude all danger but defy all laws,"—
He stands himself the Safe Sublime he draws!
In him behold all contrasts which belong
To minds abased, but passions roused, by wrong;

The blood all fervour, and the brain all guile,
The patriot's bluntness, and the bondsman's wile.
One after one the lords of time advance,—
Here Stanley meets,—how Stanley scorns, the glance!
The brilliant chief, irregularly great,
Frank, haughty, rash,—the Rupert of Debate;
Nor gout, nor toil, his freshness can destroy,
And Time still leaves all Eton in the boy;—
First in the class, and keenest in the ring,
He saps like Gladstone, and he fights like Spring;
Ev'n at the feast, his pluck pervades the board,
And dauntless game-cocks symbolize their lord.
Lo where atilt at friend—if barr'd from foe—
He scours the ground, and volunteers the blow,
And, tired with conquest over Dan and Snob,
Plants a slight bruiser on the nose of Bob;
Decorous Bob, too friendly to reprove,
Suggests fresh fighting in the next remove,
And prompts his chum, in hopes the vein to cool,
To the prim benches of the Upper School:

Yet who not listens, with delighted smile,
To the pure Saxon of that silver style;
In the clear style a heart as clear is seen,
Prompt to the rash—revolting from the mean.

Next cool, and all unconscious of reproach,
Comes the calm "Johnny who upset the coach." *
How form'd to lead, if not too proud to please,—
His fame would fire you, but his manners freeze.
Like or dislike, he does not care a jot;
He wants your vote, but your affection not;

* Lord Stanley's memorable exclamation on a certain occasion which now belongs to history,—"Johnny's upset the coach!" Never was coach upset with such perfect *sang-froid* on the part of the driver.

Yet human hearts need sun, as well as oats,
So cold a climate plays the deuce with votes.—
And while his doctrines ripen day by day,
His frost-nipp'd party pines itself away;—
From the starved wretch its own loved child we steal—
And "Free Trade" chirrups on the lap of Peel! *—
But see our statesman when the steam is on,
And languid Johnny glows to glorious John!
When Hampden's thought, by Falkland's muses dress'd,
Lights the pale cheek, and swells the generous breast;
When the pent heat expands the quickening soul,—
And foremost in the race the wheels of genius roll!

VII.

What gives the Past the haunting charms that please
Sage, scholar, bard?—The shades of men like these!
Seen in our walks;—with vulgar blame or praise,
Reviled or worshipp'd as our faction sways:
Some centuries hence, and from that praise or blame,
As light from vapour, breaks the steady flame,
And the trite Present which, while acted, seems
Time's dullest prose,—fades in the land of dreams,
Gods spring from dust, and Hero-Worship wakes
Out of that Past the humble Present makes.
And yet, what matter to ourselves the Great?
What the heart touches—*that* controls our fate!
From the full galaxy we turn to one,
Dim to all else, but to ourselves the sun;
And still, to each, some poor, obscurest life,
Breathes all the bliss, or kindles all the strife.
Wake up the countless dead!—ask every ghost
Whose influence tortured or consoled the most:

* Written before Sir Robert's avowed abandonment of protection. Prophetic.

How each pale spectre of the host would turn
From the fresh laurel and the glorious urn,
To point where rots beneath a nameless stone,
Some heart in which had ebb'd and flow'd its own!

So one by one, Calantha listlessly
Beheld and heeded not the Great pass by.
But now, why sudden that electric start?
She stands—the pale lips soundless, yet apart!
She stands, with claspèd hands and strainèd eye—
A moment's silence—one convulsive cry,
And sinking to the earth, a seeming death
Smites into chill suspense the senses and the breath:
Quick by the unconscious hostess knelt the guest,
Bathed the wan brows, and loosed the stifling vest;
As loosed the vest,—like one whose sleep of fear
Is keen with dreams that warn of danger near,—
Calantha's hand repell'd the friendly care,
And faintly clasp'd some token hoarded there,
Perchance some witness of the untold grief,—
Some sainted relic of a lost belief,
Some mournful talisman, whose touch recalls
The ghost of time in Memory's desolate halls,
And, like the vessels that, of old, enshrined
The soil of lands the exile left behind,—
Holds all youth rescues from that native shore
Of hope and passion, life shall tread no more.

Calantha wakes, but not to sense restored,
The mind still trembled on the jarring chord,
And troubled reason flicker'd in the eye,
As gleams and wanes a star in some perturbèd sky.
Yet still, through all the fever of the brain,
Terror, more strong, can Frenzy's self restrain.

Few are her words, and if at times they seem
To touch the dark truths shadow'd on her dream,
She starts, with whitening lip—looks round in fear
And murmurs, "Nay! my brother did not hear!"
Then smiles, as if the fear were laid at rest,
And clasps the token treasured at her breast,
And whispers, "Lucy, guard my sleep;—they say
That sleep is faithless, and that dreams betray!"

Yet oft the while—to watch without the door,
The brother's step glides noiseless o'er the floor,—
There meekly waits, until the welcome ray
Of Lucy's smile gives comfort to the day,
Till Lucy's whisper murmurs, "Be of cheer,"
And Pity dupes Affection's willing ear.
Once, and but once, within the room he crept,
When all was silent, and they deem'd she slept,
Not softer to the infant's cradle steals
The mother's step;—she hears not, yet she feels,
As by strange instinct, the approach;—her frame
Convulsed and shuddering as he nearer came;
Till the wild cry,—the waving hand convey
The frantic prayer, so bitter to obey;
And with stern brow, belying the wrung heart,
And voiceless lips compress'd, he turns him to depart.

VIII.

Much wondering, Lucy mused,—nor yet could find
Why one so mournful shrunk from one so kind.
Awe that had chill'd the gratitude she felt
For Morvale, now in pity learn'd to melt:
This tender patience in a man so stern,
This love untiring—fear the sole return,

This rough exterior, with this gentle breast,
Awoke a sympathy that would not rest;
The wistful eye, the changing lip, the tone
Whose accents droop'd, or gladden'd, from her own,
Haunted the woman's heart, which ever heaves
Its echo back to every sound that grieves.
Light as the gossamer its tissue spins
O'er freshest dews when summer morn begins,
Will Fancy weave its airy web above
The dews of Pity, in the dawn of Love.—
At length, Calantha's reason wakes;—the strife
Calms back,—the soul re-settles to the life.
Freed from her post, flies Lucy to rejoice
The anxious heart, so wistful for her voice;
Not at his wonted watch the brother found,
She seeks his door—no answer to her sound;
She halts in vain, till, eager to begin
The joyous tale, the bright shape glides within.
For the first time beheld, she views the lone
And gloomy rooms the master calls his own;
Not there the luxury elsewhere, which enthralls
With pomp the gazer in the rich man's halls;
Strange arms of Eastern warfare, quaintly piled,
Betray'd the man's fierce memory of the child,—
And litter'd books, in mystic scrolls enshrined
The solemn Sibyl of the elder Ind.
The girl treads fearful on the dismal floors,
And with amazèd eye the gloomy lair explores;
Thus, as some Peri strays where, couch'd in cells
With gods dethroned, the brooding Afrite dwells,
From room to room her fairy footsteps glide,
Till, lo! she starts to see him by her side.—
With crimson cheek, and downcast eyes, that quail
Beneath his own, she hurries the glad tale,

Then turns to part—but as she turns, still round
She looks,—and lingers on the magic ground,
And eyes each antique relic with the wild
Half-pleased, half-timorous, wonder of a child;
And as a child's the lonely inmate saw,
And smiled to see the pleasure and the awe;
And soften'd into kindness his deep tone,
And drew her hand, half-shrinking, in his own,
And said, "Nay, pause and task the showman's skill,
What moves thee most?—come, question me at will."

Listening she linger'd, and she knew not why
Time's wing so swiftly never seem'd to fly;
Never before unto her gaze reveal'd
The Eastern fire, the Eastern calm conceal'd:
Child of the sun, and native of the waste,
Cramp'd in the formal chains it had embraced,
His heart leapt back to its old haunts afar,
As leaps the lion from the captive bar;
And, as each token flash'd upon the mind,
Back the bold deeds that life had left behind,
The dark eye blazed, the rich words roll'd along,
Vivid as light, and eloquent as song;
At length, with sudden pause, he check'd the stream,
And his soul darken'd from the gorgeous dream.
"So," with sad voice he said, "my youth went by,
Fresh was the wave, if fitful was the sky;
What is my manhood?—curdl'd and congeal'd,
A stagnant water, in a barren field:
Gall'd with strange customs,—in the crowd alone;
And courting bloodless hearts that freeze my own.
In the far lands, where first I breathed the air,—
Smile if thou wilt,—this rugged form was fair,
For the swift foot, strong arm, bold heart give grace
To man, when danger girds man's dwelling-place,—

Thou seest the daughter of my mother, now,
Shrinks from the outcast branded on my brow;
My boyhood tamed the panther in his den,
The wild beast feels man's kindness more than men.
Like with its like, they say, will intertwine,—
I have not tamed one human heart to mine!"—
He paused abruptly. Thrice his listener sought
To shape consoling speech from soothing thought,
But thrice she fail'd, and thrice the colour came
And went, as tenderness was check'd by shame!
At length her dove-like eyes to his she raised,
And all the comfort words forbade, she gazed;
Moved by her childlike pity, but too dark
In hopeless thought than pity more to mark;
"Infant," he murmur'd, "not for others flow
The tears the wise, how hard soe'er, must know;
As yet, the Eden of a guileless breast,
Opes a frank home to every angel guest;
Soft Eve, look round!—The world in which thou art
Distrusts the angel, nor unlocks the heart—
Thy time will come!"
He spoke, and from her side
Was gone,—the heart his wisdom wrong'd replied!

II.

I.

LONDON, I take thee to a Poet's heart!
For those who seek a Helicon thou art.
Let schoolboy Strephons bleat of flocks and fields,
Each street of thine a loftier Idyl yields;
Fed by all life, and fann'd by every wind,
There burns the quenchless Poetry—*Mankind!*
Yet not for me the Olympiad of the gay,
The reeking SEASON'S dusty holiday:—
Soon as its summer pomp the mead assumes,
And Flora wanders through her world of blooms,
Vain the hot field-days of the vex'd debate,
When Sirius reigns,—let Tapeworm rule the state!
Vain Devon's cards, and Lansdowne's social feast,
Wit but fatigues, and Beauty's reign hath ceased.
His mission done, the monk regains his cell;
Nor even Douro's matchless face can spell.
Far from Man's works, escaped to God's, I fly,
And breathe the luxury of a smokeless sky.
Me, the still "LONDON," not the restless "TOWN"
(The light plume fluttering o'er the helmèd crown,)
Delights;—for there the grave Romance hath shed
Its hues; and air grows solemn with the Dead.
If, where the Lord of Rivers parts the throng,
And eastward glides by buried halls along,
My steps are led, I linger, and restore
To the changed wave the poe[illegible]-shapes of yore;

See the gilt barge, and hear the fated king
Prompt the first mavis of our Minstrel spring; *
Or mark, with mitred Nevile,† the array
Of arms and craft alarm "the Silent way,"
The Boar of Gloucester, hungering, scents his prey!
Or, landward, trace where thieves their festive hall
Hold by the dens of Law,‡ (worst thief of all!)
The antique Temple of the armèd Zeal
That wore the cross a mantle to the steel;
Time's dreary void the kindling dream supplies,
The walls expand, the shadowy towers arise,
And forth, as when by Richard's lion side,
For Christ and Fame, the Warrior-Phantoms ride!
Or if, less grave with thought, less rich with lore,
The later scenes, the lighter steps explore,
If through the haunts of living splendour led—
Has the quick Muse no empire but the Dead?

* "One of the most remarkable pictures of ancient manners which has been transmitted to us, is that in which the poet Gower describes the circumstances under which he was commanded by King Richard II.—

'To make a book after his hest.'

The good old rhymer— . . . . . had taken boat, and upon the broad river he met the king in his stately barge . . . . . The monarch called him on board his own vessel, and desired him to book 'some new thing.'—This was the origin of the Confessio Amantis."—KNIGHT'S *London*, vol. i. art. *The Silent Highway.*

† "What a picture Hall gives us of the populousness of the Thames, in the story which he tells us of the Archbishop of York (Brother to the King-maker), after leaving the widow of Edward IV. in the sanctuary of Westminster, 'sitting below on the rushes all desolate and dismayed,' and when he opened his windows and looked on the Thames, he might see the river full of boats of the Duke of Gloucester his servants, watching that no person should go to sanctuary, nor none should pass unsearched."—KNIGHT'S *London*, vol. i. art. *The Silent Highway.*

‡ A favourite rendezvous a few years since (and probably even still) for the Heroes of that Fraternity, more dear to Mercury than to Themis, was held at Devereux Court, occupying a part of the site on which stood the residence of the Knights Templars.

In each keen face, by Care or Pleasure worn,
Grief claims her sigh, or Vice invites her scorn;
And every human brow that veils a thought
Conceals the Castaly which Shakespeare sought.

II.

Amidst the crowd (what time the glowing Hours
Strew, as they glide, the summer world with flowers),
Who fly the solitude of sweets to drown
Nature's still whisper in the roar of Town;
Who tread with jaded step the weary mill—
Grind at the wheel, and call it "Pleasure" still;—
Gay without mirth, fatigued without employ,
Slaves to the joyless phantom of a joy;—
Amidst this crowd was one who, absent long,
And late return'd, outshone the meaner throng;
And, truth to speak, in him were blent the rays
Which form a halo in the vulgar gaze;
Howden's fair beauty, Beaufort's princely grace,
Hertford's broad lands, and Courtney's vaunted race;
And Pembroke's learning in that polish'd page,
Writ by the Grace, "the Manners and the Age!"
Still with sufficient youth to please the heart,
But old enough for mastery in the art;—
Renown'd for conquests in those isles which lie
In rosy seas beneath a Cnidian sky,
Where the soft Goddess yokes her willing doves,
And meets invasion with a host of Loves;
Yet not unlaurell'd in the war of wile
Which won Ulysses grave Minerva's smile,
For those deep arts the diplomat was known
Which mould the lips that whisper round a throne.

Long in the numbing hands of Law had lain
Arden's proud earldom, Arden's wide domain.
Kinsman with kinsman, race with race had vied
To snatch the prize, and in the struggle died;
Till all the rights the crowd of heirs made dim,
Death clear'd—and solved the tangled skein in him.
There was but ONE who in the bastard fame
Wealth gives its darlings, rivall'd Arden's name:
A rival rarely seen—felt everywhere,
With soul that circled bounty like the air,
Simple himself, but regal in his train,
Lavish of stores he seem'd but to disdain;
To art a Medici—to want a god,
Life's rougher paths grew level where he trod.
Much Arden (Arden had a subtle mind,
Which sought in all philosophy to find)
Loved to compare the different means by which
Enjoyment yields a harvest to the rich—
Himself already marvell'd to behold
How soon trite custom wears the gleam from gold;
Well, was his rival happier from its use
Than he (his candour whisper'd) from abuse?
He long'd to know this Morvale, and to learn:
They met—grew friends—the Sybarite and the stern.
Each had some fields in common: mostly those
From which the plant of human friendship grows.
Each had known strong vicissitudes in life;
The present ease, and the remember'd strife.
Each, though from differing causes, nursed a mind
At war with Fate, and chafed against his kind.
Each with a searching eye had sought to scan
The solemn Future, soul predicts to man;
And each forgot how, cloud-like passions mar,
In the vex'd wave, the mirror of the star;—

How all the unquiet thoughts which life supplies
May swell the ocean but to veil the skies;
And dark to Man may grow the heaven that smiled
On the clear vision Nature gave the Child.
Each, too, in each, where varying most they seem,
Found that which fed half envy, half esteem.
As stood the Pilgrim of the waste before
The stream that parted from the enchanted shore,
Though on the opposing margent of the wave
Those fairy boughs but *seeming* fruitage gave;
Though his stern manhood in its simple power,
If cross'd the barrier, soon had scorn'd the bower;
Yet, as some monk, whom holier cloisters shade,
Views from afar the glittering cavalcade,
And sighs, as sense against his will recalls
Fame's knightly lists and Pleasure's festive halls,—
So, while the conscience chid, the charm enchain'd,
And the heart envied what the soul disdain'd.

While Arden's nature in his friend's could find
An untaught force that awed his subtler mind—
Awed, yet allured;—that Eastern calm of eye
And mien—a mantle and a majesty,
At once concealing all the strife below
It shames the pride of lofty hearts to show,
And robing Art's lone outlaw with the air
Of nameless state the lords of Nature wear;—
This kingly mien contrasting this mean form,
This calm exterior with this heart of storm,
Touch'd with vague interest, undefined and strange,
The world's quick pupil whose career was change.

Forth from the crowded streets one summer day,
Rode the new friends; and cool and silent lay
Through shadowy lanes the chance-directed way.

As with slow pace and slacken'd rein they rode,
Men's wonted talk to deeper converse flow'd.

"Think'st thou," said Arden, "that the Care, whose speed
Climbs the tall bark and mounts the flying steed,
And (still to quote old Horace) hovers round
Our fretted roofs, forbears yon village ground?—
Think'st thou that Toil drives trouble from the door;
And does God's sun shine brightest on the Poor?"

"I know not," answer'd Morvale, "but I know
Each state feels envy for the state below;
Kings for their subjects—for the obscure, the great:
The smallest circle guards the happiest state.
Earth's real wealth is in the heart;—in truth,
As life looks brightest in the eyes of youth,
So simple wants—the simple state most far
From that entangled maze in which we are,
Seem unto nations what youth is to man,"—

"'When wild in woods the noble savage ran,'"
Said Arden, smiling. "Well we disagree;
Even youth itself reflects no charms for me;
And all the shade upon my life bestow'd
Spreads from the myrtle which my boyhood sow'd."
His bright face fell,—he sigh'd. "And canst thou guess
Why all once coveted now fails to bless?—
Why all around me palls upon the eye,
And the heart saddens in the summer sky?
It is that youth expended life too soon:
A morn too glowing sets in storm at noon."

"Nay," answer'd Morvale, gently, "hast thou tried
That *second* youth, to which ev'n follies guide;

Which to the wanderer SENSE, when tired and spent,
Proclaims the fount by which to fix the tent?
The heart but rests when sense forbears to roam;
We win back freshness when Love smiles on Home;—
Home not to *thee*, O happy one! denied."

"To me of all," the impatient listener cried,
"Thy words but probe the wounds I vainly hide;
That which I pine for, thou hast pictured now;—
The hearth, the home, the altar, and the vow;
The tranquil love, unintertwined with shame;
The child's sweet kiss;—the Father's holy name;
The link to lengthen a time-honour'd line;—
These not for me, and yet these should be mine."
"If," said the Indian, "counsel could avail,
Or pity soothe, a friend invites thy tale."

"Alas!" sigh'd Arden, "nor confession's balm
Can heal, nor wisdom whisper back to calm.
Yet hear the tale—thou wilt esteem me less—
But Grief, the Egoist, yearneth to confess.
I tell of guilt—and guilt all men must own,
Who but avow the loves their youth has known.
Preach as we will, in this wrong world of ours,
Man's fate and woman's are contending powers;
Each strives to dupe the other in the game,—
Guilt to the victor—to the vanquish'd shame!"
He paused, and noting how austerely gloom'd
His friend's dark visage, blush'd, and thus resumed.
"Nay, I approve not of the code I find,
Not less the wrong to which the world is kind.
But, to be frank, how oft with praise we scan
Men's actions only when they deal with man;

Lo, gallant Lovelace, free from every art
That stains the honour or defiles the heart,—
With men;—but how, if woman the pursuit?
What lies degrade him, and what frauds pollute;
Yet still to Lovelace either sex is mild,
And new Clarissas only sigh—'How wild!'"

"Enough," said Morvale; "I perforce believe:
Strong Adam owns no equal in his Eve;
But worse the bondage in your bland disguise;
Europe destroys,—kind Asia only buys!
If dull the Harem, yet its roof protects,
And Power, when sated, still its slave respects.
With you, ev'n pity fades away with love,—
No gilded cage gives refuge to the dove;
Worse than the sin the curse it leaves behind:
Here the crush'd heart, or there the poison'd mind,—
Your streets a charnel or a market made,
For the lorn hunger, or the loathsome trade.
Pardon,—Pass on!"

"Behold, the Preface done,"
Arden resumed, "now opens Chapter One!"

III.

LORD ARDEN'S TALE.

"Rear'd in a court, a man while yet a boy,
Hermes said 'Rise,' and Venus sigh'd 'Enjoy;'
My earlier dreams, like tints in rainbows given,
Caught from the Muse, glow'd but in clasping heaven;
The bird-like instinct of a sphere afar
Pined for the air, and chafed against the bar.

But can to Guelphs Augustan tastes belong?
Or *Georgium Sidus* look benign on song?
My short-lived Muse the ungenial climate tried,
Breathed some faint warbles, caught a cold, and died!
Wise kinsmen whisper'd 'Hush! forewarn'd in time;
The feet that rise are not the feet of Rhyme;
Your cards are good; but all is in the lead,
Play out the heart, and you are lost indeed:
Leave verse, my boy, to unaspiring men—
The eagle's pinion never sheds a pen!'

"So fled the Muse! What left the Muse behind?
The aimless fancy and the restless mind;
The eyes, still won by whatsoe'er was bright,
But lost the star's to prize the diamond's light.
Man, like the child, accepts the bauble boon,
And clasps the coral where he ask'd the moon.
Forbid the pomp and royalty of heaven,—
To the born Poet still the earth is given;
Duped by each glare in which Corruption seems
To give the glory imaged on his dreams:
Thus, what had been the thirst for deathless fame,
Grew the fierce hunger for the Moment's name;
Ambition placed its hard desires in Power,
And saw no Jove but in the Golden Shower.
No miser I—no niggard of the store—
The end Olympus, but the means the ore:
I look'd below—there Lazarus crawl'd disdain'd;
I look'd aloft—there, who but Dives reign'd?
He who would make the steeps of power his home,
Must mask the Titan till he rules the Gnome.
If I insist on this, my soul's disease,
Excuse for fault thy practised sight foresees:

It makes the moral of my tale, in truth,
And boyhood sow'd the poison of my youth.

"Meanwhile men praised, and women smiled;—the wing,
Bow'd from the height, still bask'd beneath the spring.
Pass by the Paphian follies of that day,—
When true love comes, it is to close our May.
Well, ere my boyish holiday was o'er,
The grim god came, and mirth was mine no more:
A well-born pauper, I seem'd doom'd to live
By what great men to well-born paupers give:
I had an uncle high in power and state,
Who ruled three kingdoms' and one nephew's fate.
This uncle loved, as English thanes will all,
An autumn's respite in his rural hall;
In slaughtering game, relax'd his rigid breast;
And so,—behold me martyr'd to his guest!

IV.

"Wandering, one day, in discontented mood
By a clear brook—through grassy solitude,
Leading the dance of light waves chanting low—
A little world of sunshine seem'd to grow
Out from the landscape—as with sudden spring
From bosk and brake—leapt the stream glittering.
Lo, the meek home, its porch with roses twined,
Green sward before, a sacred tower behind;
On the green sward the year's last flowers were gay,
And the last glory of the golden day
Paused on the spire, that, shining, soar'd to cleave
Those clouds, the loveliest, that precede the eve.

"Along the bank, beneath the bowering tree,
Young fairies play'd—young voices laugh'd in glee;
One voice more mellow'd in its silver sound,
Yet blithe as rang the gladdest on the ground;
One shape more ripen'd, one sweet face more fair,
Yet not less happy, the Titania there.
Soft voice, fair face, I hear, I see ye still!
Shades and dim echoes from the blissful hill
Behind me left, to cast but darkness o'er
The waste slow-lengthening to the grave before!

"So Love was born. With love invention came;
I won my entrance, but conceal'd my name.
A village priest her father, poor and wise,
In aught that clears to mortal sight the skies,
But blind and simple as a child to all
The things that pass upon the earth we crawl;
The mask'd Lothario to his eyes appear'd
A student youth, by Alma Mater rear'd
The word to preach, the hunger to endure,
And see Ambition close upon a Cure;—
A modest youth, who own'd his learning slight,
And brought his taper to the master's light.
This tale believed, the good man's harmless pride
Was pleased the bashful neophyte to guide:
Spread out his books, and, moved to pity, press'd
The backward pupil to the daily guest.

"So from a neighbouring valley, where they deem
My home, each noon I cross the happy stream,
And hail the eyes already watchful grown,
And clasp the hand that trembles in my own;
But not for guilt had I conceal'd my name,
The young warm passion nursed no thought of shame;

The spell that bound ennobled while it charm'd,
And Romeo's love Lothario's guile disarm'd;
And vain the guile had been!—impure desire
Round that chaste light but hover'd to expire;
Her angel nature found its own defence,
Ev'n in the instincts of its innocence;
As that sweet plant which opens every hue
Of its frank heart to eyes content to view,
But folds its leaves and shrinks in coy disdain
From the least touch that would the bloom profane.
Link'd with the woman's Meekness, side by side,
Stood, not to lose but guard the angel, Pride;
Pride, with the shield for honour, not the heart,
Sacred from stain, not proof against the dart.
Brief,—then such love it was my lot to win
As sways a life to every grief but—sin

V.

"Yet in the light of day to win and wed,
To boast a bride, yet not to own a shed;
To doom the famine, yet proclaim the bliss,
And seal the ruin in the nuptial kiss;—
Love shunn'd such madness for the loved one's sake;
What course could Prudence sanction Love to take?
Lenient I knew my kinsman to a vice;
But, oh, to folly Cato less precise!
And all my future, in my kinsman bound,
Shadow'd his humours—smiled in him or frown'd;
But uncles still, however high in state,
Are mortal men—and Youth has hope to wait,
And Love a conqueror's confidence in Fate.—
A secret Hymen reconciled in one
Caution and bliss—if Mary could be won?

Hard task!—I said it was my lot to win
Sway o'er a life for grief;—this was not sin.
To her I told my name, rank, doubts, and fears,
And urged the prayer too long denied with tears—
'Reject'st thou still,' I cried, 'well, then to me
The pride to offer all life holds to thee;
I go to tell my love, proclaim my choice—
Clasp want, mar fate, meet ruin, and rejoice,
So that, at least, when next we meet, thy sigh
Shall own this truth—"He better loved than I."'

"With that, her hand upon my own she laid,
Look'd in my eyes—the sacrifice was made;
Alas, she had no mother!—Nature moved
That heart to this—she trusted, for she loved!

"I had a friend of lowlier birth than mine,
The sunnier spot allured the trailing vine.
My rising fortunes had the southern air,
And fruit might bless the plant that clamber'd there.
My smooth Clanalbin!—shrewd, if smooth, was he,
His soul was prudent, though his life was free;
Scapin to serve, and Machiavel to plot,
Red-hair'd, thin-lipp'd, sly, supple,—and a Scot!
To him the double project I confide,
To cloak the rite, and yet to clasp the bride;
Long he resisted—solemnly he warn'd,
And urged the perils love had seen and scorn'd.
At length subdued, he groan'd a slow consent,
And pledged a genius practised to invent.
A priest was found—a license was procured,
Due witness hired, and secrecy assured;
All this his task:—'tis o'er;—and Mary's life
Bound up in one who dares not call her wife!

"Alas—alas, why on the fatal brink
Of the abyss—doth not the instinct shrink?
The meaner tribe the coming storm foresees—
In the still calm the bird divines the breeze—
The ox that grazes shuns the poison-weed—
The unseen tiger frights afar the steed—
To man alone no kind foreboding shows
The latent horror or the ambush'd foes;
O'er each blind moment hangs the funeral pall,
Heaven shines, earth smiles—and night descends on all!

"But I!—fond reader of imagined skies,
Foretold my future in those stars—her eyes!
O heavenly Moon, circling with magic hues
And mystic beauty all thy beams suffuse,
Is not in love thine own fair secret seen?
Love smooths the rugged—love exalts the mean:
Love in each ray inspires the hush'd alarm,
Love silvers every shadow into charm.

VI.

"O lonely beech, beneath whose bowering shade
The tryst, encircling Paradise, was made,
How the heart heard afar the hurrying feet,
And swell'd to breathless words—'At last we meet!'
But Autumn fades—dark Winter comes, and then
Fate from Elysium calls me back to men;
We part!—not equal is the anguish;—she
Parts with all earth in that farewell to me;
For not the grate more bars the veilèd nun
From the fair world with which her soul has done,
Than love the heart, that vows, without recall,
To one,—fame, honour, memory, hope, and all!

But I!—behold me in the dazzling strife,
The gaud, the pomp, the joyous roar of life,—
Man, with man's heart insatiate, ever stirr'd
By the crowd's breath to conflict with the herd;
Which never long one thought alone can sway,—
The dream fades from us when we leap to day.
New scenes surround me, new ambitions seize,—
All life one fever,—who defy disease?—
Each touch contagion:—living with the rest,
The world's large pulse keeps time in every breast.
Yet still for her—for her alone, methought,
Its web of schemes the vulgar labour wrought:
To ransom fate—to soar, from serfdom, free,
Snap the strong chains of high-born penury;
And, grown as bold to earth as to the skies,
Proclaim the bliss of happy human ties:—
So, ever scheming, the soothed conscience deem'd!
Fate smiled, and speeded all for which I schemed.
My noble kinsman saw with grave applause
My sober'd moods, too wise to guess the cause.
'Tis well,' said he, one evening; 'you have caught
From me the ardour of the patriot's thought;
No more distinguish'd in the modes of vice,
Forsworn the race-course, and disdain'd the dice:
A nobler race, a mightier game await
The soul that sets its cast upon the state.
Thoughtful, poor, calm, yet eager; such, in truth,
He who is great in age should be in youth,
Lo, your commencement!'

"And my kinsman set
Before the eyes it brighten'd—the Gazette!
Oh, how triumphant, Calendar of Fame!
Halo'd in type, emerged the aspirant's name!

"We send you second to a court, 'tis true;
Small, as befits a diplomat so new,'
Quoth my wise kinsman: 'but requiring all
Your natural gifts;—to rise not is to fall!
And harkye, stripling, you are handsome, young,
Active, ambitious, and from statesmen sprung!
Wed well—add wealth to power by me possess'd,
And sleep on roses,—I will find the rest!
But one false step,—pshaw, boy! I do not preach
Of saws and morals, his own code to each,—
By one false step, I mean one foolish thing,
And the wax melts, my Icarus, from your wing!
Let not the heart the watchful mind betray,—
Enough!—no answer!—sail the First of May!'

"Here, then, from vapour broke at last the sun!
Station, career, fame, fortune, all begun!
Now, greater need than ever to conceal
The secret spring that moved the speeding wheel;
And half forgetting that I wish'd forgot,
Each thought divides the absent from my lot.
One night, escaped my kinsman's hall, which blazed
With dames who smiled, and garter'd peers who praised,
I seek my lonely home,—ascend the stair,—
Gain my dim room,—what stranger daunts me there?
A grey old man!—I froze his look before;
The Gorgon's eye scarce fix'd its victim more,—
The bride's sad father on the bridegroom's floor!
In the brief pause, how terrible and fast,
As on the drowning seaman, rush'd the past!
How had he learn'd my name,—abode,—the tie
That bound?—for all spoke lightning in his eye.
Lo, on the secret in whose darkness lay
Power, future, fortune, poured the hateful ray!
Thus silence ceased.

"'When first my home you deign'd
To seek, what found you?—cheeks no tears had stain'd!
Untroubled hearts, and conscience clear as day:
And lips that loved, where now they fear to pray:
'Twixt kin and kin, sweet commune undefiled—
The grateful father—the confiding child!
What now that home?—behold! its change may speak
In hair thus silver'd—in the furrow'd cheek!
My child.'—(he paused, and in his voice, not eyes,
Tears seek the vent indignant pride denies)
'My child—God pardon me!—I was too proud
To call her "daughter!"—what shall call the crowd?
Man—man, she cowers beneath a Father's eye,
And shuns his blessing—with one wish to die;
And I that death-bed will resign'd endure
If—speak the word—the soul that parts is pure?'

"'Who dares deny it?' I began, but check'd
In the warm burst—cold wisdom hiss'd—'Reflect;
Thy fears had outstripp'd truth—as yet unknown,
The vows, the bond!—are these for thee to own?'
The father mark'd my pause, and changing cheek,
'Go on!—why falter if the truth thou speak?'
"Who dares deny it?"—Thou!—thy lip—thine eye—
Thy heart—thy conscience—*these* are what deny?
O Heaven, that I were not thy priest!'
"His look
Grew stern and dark—the natural Adam shook
The reverend form an instant;—like a charm
The pious memory stay'd the lifted arm;
And shrunk to self-rebuke the threatening word,
'Man's not my weapons—I thy servant, Lord!'
Moved, I replied—'Could love suffice alone
In this hard world,—the love to thee made known,
A bliss to cherish, 'twere a pride to own:

And if I pause, and if I falter—yet
I hide no shame, I strive with no regret.
Believe mine honour—wait the ripening hour;
Time hides the germ, the season brings the flower.'
Wildly he cried—'What words are these?—but one
Sentence I ask—her sire should call thee *son!*
Hist, let the heavens but hear us!—in her life
Another lives—if pure she is thy wife!
Now answer!'
I had answer'd, as became
The native manhood and the knightly name;
But shall I own it? the suspicious chill,
The world-wise know, froze up the arrested will.
Whose but *her* lips sworn never to betray,
Had fail'd their oath, and dragg'd my name to day?
True, she had left the veil upon the shrine,
But set the snare to make confession mine.
Thus half resentment, half disdain, repell'd
The man's frank justice, and the truth withheld
Yet, so invoked, I scorn'd at least the lie,
And met the question with this proud reply:—
'If thou dost doubt thy child, depart secure,
My love is sinless and her soul is pure.
This by mine honour, and to Heaven, I swear!
Dost thou ask more?—then bid thy child declare;
What she proclaims as truth, myself will own;
What she withholds, alike I leave unknown;
What she demands, I am prepared to yield;
Now doubt or spurn me—but my lips are seal'd.'
I ceased, and stood with haughty mien and eye,
That seem'd all further question to defy;
He gazed, as if still spell'd in hope or fear,
And hungering for the word that fail'd the ear.

At last, and half unconscious, in the thrall
Of the cold awe, he groan'd—
'And is this all?
Courage, poor child—there may be justice yet—
Justice, Heaven, justice!'
With this doubtful threat
He turn'd, was gone!—that look of stern despair,
The uncertain footstep tottering down the stair,
The clapping door; and then that void and chill,
Which would be silence, were the conscience still;
That sense of something gone, we would recall;
The soul's dim stun before it feels its fall.

VII.

"Next day, the sire my noble kinsman sought;
One ruling senates must be just, he thought.
What chanced, untold—what follow'd may declare:
Behold me summon'd to my uncle's chair!
See his cold eye—*I* saw my ruin there!
I saw and shrunk not, for a sullen pride
Embraced alike the kinsman and the bride:
Scorn'd here, the seeming snare by cunning set;
And there, coarse thraldom, with rebellion met.

"Brief was my Lord—
'An old man tells me, sir,
You woo his child, to wed her you demur;
Who knows, perhaps—(and such his shrewd surmise),
The noose is knit—you but conceal the ties!
Please to inform me, ere I go to court,
How stands the matter?—sir, my time is short.'

"'My Lord,' I answer'd, with unquailing brow,
'Not to such ears should youth its faults avow;

And grant me pardon if I boldly speak,
Youth may have secrets honour shuns to seek.
I own I love, proclaim that love as pure!
If this be sin—its sentence I endure.
All else belongs unto that solemn shrine,
In the veil'd heart, which manhood holds divine.
Men's hearths are sacred, so our laws decree;
Are hearts less sacred? mine at least is free.
Suspect, disown, forsake me, if thou wilt;
I prize the freedom where thou seest the guilt.'
My kinsman's hand half-shaded the keen eye,
Which glanced askant;—he paused in his reply.
At length, perchance, his practised wit foresaw
Threats could not shake where interest fail'd to awe
And judged it wise to construe for the best
The all I hid, the little I confess'd;
Calmly he answer'd—
'Sir, I like this heat;
Duper or duped, a well-bred man's discreet;
Take but this hint (one can't have all in life,)
You lose the uncle if you win the wife.
In this, you choose Rank, Station, Power, Career;
In that, Bills, Babies,—and the Bench, I fear.
Hush;—'the least said'—(old proverb, sir, but true!)—
As yet your fault indulgently I view.
Words—notes (sad stuff!)—some promise rashly made—
Action for breach—*that* scandal must be stay'd.
I trust such scrapes will teach you to beware;
'Twill cost some hundreds—that be my affair.
Depart at once—to-morrow—nay, to-day:
When fairly gone, there will be less to pay!'
So spoke the Statesman, whom experience told
The weight of passion in the scales of gold.

Pleased I escape, but how reprieve enjoy?
One word from her distrusted could destroy!
Yet that distrust the whispering heart belied,
Self ceased, and anger into pity died;
I thought of Mary in her desolate hour,
And shudder'd at the blast, and trembled for the flower.
Why not go seek her?—chide the impatient snare;
Or if faith linger'd, win it to forbear?
Now was the time, no jealous father there!
Swift as the thought impell'd me, I obey'd!
'Tis night; once more I greet the moonlit shade;
Once more I see the happy murmuring rill;
The white cot bower'd beneath the pastoral hill!
An April night, when, after sparkling showers,
The dewy gems betray the cradled flowers,
As if some sylphid, startled from her bed
In the rath blossom by the mortal's tread,
Had left behind her pearly coronal.—
Bright shone the stars on Earth's green banquet hall;
You seem'd, abroad, to see, to feel, to hear
The new life flushing through the virgin year;
The visible growth—the freshness and the balm;
The pulse of Nature throbbing through the calm;
As wakeful, over every happy thing,
Watch'd through the hush the Earth's young mother—Spring!
Calm from the lattice shot a steady ray;
Calm on the sward its silvery lustre lay;
And reach'd, to glad, the glancing waves at play.
I stood and gazed within the quiet room;—
Gazed on her cheek;—*there*, spring had lost its bloom!
Alone she sate!—*Alone!*—that worn-out word,
So idly spoken, and so coldly heard;

Yet all that poets sing, and grief hath known,
Of hope laid waste, knells in that word—ALONE!

"Who contemplates, aspires, or dreams, is not
Alone: he peoples with rich thoughts the spot.
The only loneliness—how dark and blind!—
Is that where fancy cannot dupe the mind;—
Where the heart, sick, despondent, tired with all,
Looks joyless round, and sees the dungeon wall;
When even God is silent, and the curse
Of torpor settles on the universe;
When prayer is powerless, and one sense of dearth
Abysses all, *save* solitude, on earth!
So sate the bride!—the drooping form, the eye
Vacant, yet fix'd,—that air which Misery,
The heart's Medusa, hardens into stone,
Sculptured the Death which dwelleth in the lone!
Oh, the wild burst of joy,—the life that came
Swift, brightening, bounding through the lips and frame,
When o'er the floors I stole, and whisper'd soft her name!
'Come—come at last! Oh, rapture!'
Who can say
Why meaner natures hold mysterious sway
Over the nobler? Why mine orb malign
Ruled as a fate a spirit so divine;
Giving or light or darkness all its own
Unto a star so near the Sapphire Throne?

"'So thou art come!'
'Hush! say whose lips reveal'd
All *these* soft traitors swore to guard conceal'd—
Our love—my name?'

'Not I—not I—thy wife!
No, truth to thee more dear than fame, than life:
A friend, my father's friend, the secret told;
How guess'd I know not:—Oh! if Love controll'd
My heart that hour—that bitter hour—when, there
Bent that old man, who——Husband, hear my prayer
Have mercy on my father!—break, oh, break
This crushing silence!—bid his daughter speak,
And say 'Thou'rt not dishonour'd?'
'If thou wilt,
Tell all;—dishonour not alone in guilt!
Men's eyes dishonour in the fallen see;—
Speak, and dishonour thou inflict'st on me:
The debt, the want, the beggary, and the shame,—
The pauper branded on the noble's name!
Speak and inflict—I still can spurn—the doom;
Unveil the altar to prepare the tomb!
I, who already in my grasp behold,
Bright from Hesperian fields, the fruit of gold,
By which alone the glorious prize we gain,
Foil'd of the goal will die upon the plain.
I own two brides, both dear alike, and see
In one Ambition—in the other Thee:
Destroy thy rival, and to her destroy'd
Succeeds despair to make the world a void.'
Then, with stern frankness to that shrinking ear,
I told my hopes,—in her my only fear;
Told, with a cheek no humbling blushes dyed,
How met the sire—how unavow'd the bride!
'Thus have I wrong'd—this cruel silence mine;
And now be truth, and truth is vengeance, thine!'
I ceased to speak; lo, she had ceased to weep;
Her white lips writhed, as Suffering in its sleep;
And o'er the frame a tremulous shudder went,
As every life-stream to the source was sent:

The very sense seem'd absent from the look,
And with the Heart, its temple, Reason shook!
So there was silence; such a silence broods
In winter nights, o'er frost-bound solitudes,
Darkness, and ice, and stillness all in one,—
The silence without life, the withering without sun.
But o'er that silence, as at night's full noon,
Through breathless cloud, shimmers the sudden moon;
A sad but heavenly smile a moment stirr'd,
And heralded the martyr's patient word:
'Fear not; pursue thy way to fortune, fame;
I will not soil thy glory with my shame.
Betray! avenge!—For ever, until thou
Proclaim the bond and ratify the vow,
Closed in this heart, as lamps within the tomb,
Shall waste the light, that lives amidst the gloom,—
That lives, for oh! the day *shall* come at length,
Though late, though slow,—(give hope, for hope is strength!)—
When, from a father's breast no more exiled,
The wife may ask forgiveness for the child?'"

VIII.

"And so you parted?" with a moisten'd eye,
Said Morvale;—"nay, man, spare me the reply;
Too much the Eve has moved me——"
"Not to feel
That for the serpent which thy looks reveal,"
Said Arden, sadly smiling; "yet in truth,
See how the grey world grafts its age on youth;
See how we learn to prize the bullion Vice,
Coin'd in all shapes, yet still but Avarice;

The stamp may vary,—you the coin may call
'Ambition,' 'Power,' 'Success,'—but Gold is all.
Mine is the memoir of a selfish age:
Turn every leaf—slight difference in the page;
Through each, the same fierce struggle to secure
Earth's one great end—distinction from the Poor;
All our true wealth, like alchemists of old,
Fused in the furnace—for a grain of gold.

IX.

"Well then, we parted,—to make brief the tale,
I take my orders, and my leave, set sail;
For weeks, for months, fond letters, long nor few,
Keep hope alive with love for ever new:
If she had suffer'd, she betray'd it not;
All save one sweetness—'that we loved'—forgot.
She never named her father;—once indeed
The name *was* writ—but blurr'd;—it was decreed
That she should fill the martyr-measure,—hide,
Not the dart only, but the bleeding side,
And, wholly generous in the offering made,
Veil even sorrow least it should upbraid.

"At length one letter came—the *last;* more blest
In faith, in love, false hope, than all the rest,
But at the close some hastier lines appear,
Tremblingly writ, and stain'd with many a tear,
In which, less said than timorously implied,
(The maid still blushing through the secret bride),
I heard her heart through that far distance beat:
The hour Eve's happiest daughter dreads to meet,—
The hour of Nature's agony was nigh,—
Husband and father, false one, where was I?

"Slow day on slow day, unrevealing, crept,
And still its ice the freezing silence kept:
Fear seized my soul, I could no longer brook
The voiceless darkness which the daylight took.
I feign'd excuse for absence;—left the shore:
Fair blow the winds;—behold her home once more!

"Her home! a desert! Still, though rank and wild,
On the rank grass the heedless floweret smiled;
Still by the porch you heard the ungrateful bee;
Still brawl'd the brooklet's unremembering glee;
But they—the souls of the sweet pastoral ground?
Green o'er the father rose the sullen mound!
Amidst his poor he slept; *his* end was known,—
Life's record rounded with the funeral stone:
But she?—but Mary?—but my child?—what dews
Fall on *their* graves?—what herbs which heaven renews
Pall their pure clay?—Oh! were it mine at least
To weep, beloved, where your relics rest!—
Bear with me, Morvale,—pity if you can—
These thoughts unman me—no, they prove me man!"
"Man of the cities," with a mutter'd scorn,
Groan'd the stern Nomad from the lands of Morn,—
"Man of the sleek, far-looking prudence, which
Beggars life's May, life's Autumn to enrich;
Which, the deed doing, halts not in its course,
But, the deed done, finds comfort in remorse.
Man, in whom sentiment, the bloodless shade
Of noble passion, alternates with trade,—
Hard in his error—feeble in his tears,
And huckstering love, yet prattling of the spheres!"
So mused the sombre savage, till the pale
And self-gnaw'd worldling nerved him to his tale:—

"The hireling watch'd the bed where Mary lay,
In stranger arms my first-born saw the day.
Below,—unseen *his* travail, all unknown
His war with Nature, sate the sire alone:
He had not thrust the one he still believed,
If silent, sinless, or in sin deceived—
He had not thrust her from a father's door;
So Shame came in, and cower'd upon the floor,
And face to face with Shame, he sate to hear
The groan above bring torture to his ear.
In that sad night, when the young mother slept,
Forth from his door the elder mourner crept;
Absent for days, none knowing whither bent,
Till back return'd abruptly as he went.
With a swift tremulous stride he climb'd the stair,
Through the closed chamber gleam'd his silver hair,
And Mary heard his voice soft—pitying—as in prayer!
'Child, child, I was too hard!—But woe is wild;
Now I know all!—again I clasp my child!'
Within his arms, upon his heart again
His Mary lay, and strove for words in vain;
She strove for words, but better spoke through tears
The love the heart, through silence vents and hears.

"All this I gather'd from the nurse, who saw
The scene, which dews from hireling eyes could draw;
So far;—her sob the pastor heard, and turn'd,
Waved his wan hand, nor what more chanced he learn'd.

"Next morn in death the happier father lay,
From sleep to Heaven his soul had pass'd away;
He had but lived to pardon and to bless
His child;—emotion kills in its excess,—

And that task done, why longer on the rack
Stretch the worn frame?—God's mercy call'd him back.
The day they buried him, while yet the strife
Of sense and memory raged for death and life
In Mary's shattered brain, her father's friend,
Whose hand, perchance, had sped him to his end,
Whose zeal officious had explored, reveal'd
My name, the half, worse half, of all conceal'd,
Sought her, and saw alone: When gone, a change
Came o'er the victim terrible and strange;
All grief seem'd hush'd—a stern tranquillity
Calm'd the wan brow and fix'd the glassy eye;
She spoke not, moved not, wept not,—on her breast
Slept Earth's new stranger—not more deep its rest.
They fear'd her in that mood—with noiseless tread
Stole from the room; and, ere the morn, she fled.
Gone the young Mother with her babe!—no trace;
As the wind goes—she vanish'd from the place;
They search'd the darkness of the wood, they pried
Into the secrets of the tempting tide,
In vain,—unseen on earth as in the wave,
Where life found refuge or despair a grave."
"And is this all?" said Morvale—
"No, my thought
Guess'd at the clue; her father's friend I sought,
A stern hard man, of Calvin's iron mould,
And yet I moved him, and his tale he told.
It seem'd, (by me unmark'd), amidst the rest,
My uncle's board had known this homely guest.
Our evil star had led the guest, one day,
Where through the lone glade wound our lovers' way,
To view, with Age's hard, suspecting eyes,
The high-born courtier in the student's guise.
Thus, when the father, startled to vague fears,
By his child's waning cheek and unrevealing tears,

First to his brother priest for counsel came,
He urged stern question—track'd the grief to shame,
Guess'd the undoer, and disclosed the name.

"Time went—the priest had still a steady trust
In Mary's honour; but, to mine unjust,
Divined some fraud—explored, and found a clue,
There had been marriage, if the rites were due;
Had learn'd Clanalbin's name, as one whose eye
Had seen, whose witness might attest the tie.
This news to Mary's father was convey'd
The eve her infant on her heart was laid.

"That night he left his home, he did not rest
Till found Clanalbin—'Well, and he confess'd?'
I cried impatient;—my informer's eye
Flash'd fire—'Confess'd the fraud,' was his reply.
'The fraud!'—'The impious form, the vile disguise!
Mock priest, false marriage, hell's whole woof of *lies*!'
'Lies!—had the sound earth open'd its abyss
Beneath my feet, my soul had shudder'd less.
'Lies!—but not mine!—his own!—not mine such *ill*,
O wife, I fly—to right, avenge, and claim *thee* still!'"
"Thy hand—I wrong'd thee," Morvale falter'd, while
His strong heart heaved—"Thou didst avenge the guile?
Thou found'st thy friend—thy witness—well! and he?"—
"Had spoken truth, the truth of perfidy.
This man had loved me in his own dark way,
Loved for past kindness in our wilder day,
Loved for the future which, obscure for him,
Link'd with my fate, with that grew bright or dim.
I told thee how he warr'd with my intent,
The strong dissuasion, and the slow consent:
The slow consent but veil'd the labour'd wile,
That I might yet be great, he grovell'd to be vile.

'*Twas* a false hymen—a mock priest—and she
The pure, dishonour'd—the dishonourer free!

"This then the tale that, while it snapp'd the chord,
Still to the father's heart the child restored;
This told to her by the hard zealot's tongue,
Had the last hope from spoil'd existence wrung;
Had driven the outcast through the waste to roam,
And with the altar shatter'd ev'n the home.
No! trust ev'n then,—ev'n then, hope, was not o'er:
One morn the wanderer reach'd Clanalbin's door.
O steadfast saint! amidst the lightning's scathe,
Still to the anchor clung the lingerer Faith;
Still through the tempest of a darken'd brain,
Where misery gnaw'd and memory rack'd in vain,
The last lone angel that deserts the grief
Of noble souls, survived and smiled,—BELIEF!
There had she come, herself myself to know,
And bow'd the head, and waited for the blow!
What matter how the villain soothed, or sought
To mask the crime?—enough that it was wrought;
She heard in silence,—when all said, all learn'd,
Still silent linger'd; then a flush return'd
To the pale cheek,—the Woman and the Wrong
Rear'd the light form,—the voice came clear and strong.
'Tell him my father's grave is closed; the dread
Of shame sleeps with him—dying with the dead:
Tell him on earth we meet no more;—in vain
Would he redress the wrong, and clear the stain,
His child is nameless; and his bride—what now
To her, too late, the mockery of the vow?
I was his wife—his equal;—to endure
Earth's slander? Yes!—because my soul was pure!

Now, were he kneeling here,—fame, fortune won,—
My pride would bar him from the fallen one.
Say this; if more he seek my fate, reply—
'Once stain the ermine, and its fate—to die!'
I need not tell thee if my fury burst
Against the wretch—the accurser—the accurst!
I need not tell thee if I sought each trace
That lured false hope to woe's lorn resting-place;
If, when all vain,—gold, toil, and art essay'd,
Still in my sunlight stalk'd the avenging shade,
Lost to my life for ever;—on the ground
Where dwell the spectres,—Conscience—ever found!"

X.

"True was the preface to thy gloomy tale;
Pity can soothe not—counsel not avail,"
Said Morvale, moodily. "What bliss foregone!
What years of rich life wasted! What a throne
In the arch-heaven abandon'd! And for what?
Darkness and gold!—the slave's most slavish lot!
Thy choice forsook the light—the day divine—
God's loving air—for bondage and the mine!
Oh! what delight to struggle side by side
With one loved soother!—up the steep to guide
Her steps—as clinging to thy hardier form,
She treads the thorn and smiles upon the storm!
And when firm will and gallant heart had won
The hill-top opening to the steadfast sun,
Look o'er the perils of the vanquish'd way,
And bless the toil through which the victory lay,
And murmur—'Which the sweeter fate, to dare
With thee the evil, or with thee to share

The good?' Nay, haunting must thine error be;
Thee, Camdeo gave the blest Amrita tree,*
The ambrosia of the gods,—to scorn the prize,
And choose the Champac† for its golden dyes:
Thou hast forsaken—(thou must bear the grief)—
The immortal fruitage for the withering leaf!"

"Nay," answer'd Arden, writhing, "cease to chide;
Who taunts the ordeal should the fire have tried.
If Fortune's priests had train'd thy soul, like mine,
To worship Fortune's as the holiest shrine,
Perchance my error, cynic, had been thine!"

"Pardon," said Morvale; "and my taunt to shame,
Know me thus weak,—I envy while I blame;
Thou hast been loved! And had I err'd like thee;
Mine had been crime, from which thy soul is free,
Thy gentler breast the traitor could forgive——"
"Never!" cried Arden—

"*Does the Traitor live?*"

And as the ear that hissing whisper thrill'd,
That calm stern eye the very life-blood chill'd;
For there, the instinct Cain bequeath'd us spoke,
And from the chain the wild's fierce savage broke.
"O yes!" the fiery Alien thus renew'd;
"I know how holy life by law is view'd;
I know how all life's glory may be marr'd,
If safe the clay, which, as life's all, ye guard.

* The Amrita is the name given by the mythologists of Thibet to the heavenly tree which yields its ambrosial fruits to the gods.

† The Champac, a flower of a bright gold-colour, with which the Indian women are fond of adorning their hair. Moore alludes to the custom in the "Veiled Prophet."

"The maid of India blest again to hold
In her full lap the Champac's leaves of gold," &c.

Law—Law! what is it but the word for gold?
Revenge is crime, if taken—Law if sold!
Vile tongues, vile scribes, may rot your name away,
But Law protects you,—with a fine to pay!
The child dishonour'd—the adulterous wife,
Gold requites all, save this base garment—life!
So, *life* alone is sacred!—*so*, your law
Hems the worm's carcass with a godhead's awe:
So, if some mighty wrong with black despair
Blots out your sun, and taints to plague the air;
If with a human impulse shrinks the soul
Back from the dross which compensates the whole;
If from the babbling court, the legal toil,
And the lash'd lackey's guerdon, ye recoil,
And seize your vengeance with your own right arm,
How every dastard quivers with alarm!
Mine be the heart, that can itself defend—
Hate to the foe, devotion to the friend!—
The fearless trust, and the relentless strife:
Honour unsold, and wrong avenged with life!"
He ceased, with trembling lip and haughty crest,
The native heathen labouring in the breast!
As waves some pine, with all its storm of boughs,
O'er the black gulf Norwegian winds arouse,
Shook that strong spirit, gloomy and sublime,
Bending with troubled thought above the abyss of crime!

XI.

Long was the silence, till, to calm restored
The moody Indian and the startled lord.
"And yet," resumed the first, with softer mien,
And lip that smiled, half mocking, yet serene,

"Not long thy sorrow dimm'd thy life;—unless
Men's envy wrong thee, thou might'st more confess
Of loves, perchance as true and as deceived;
Of rose-wreaths wither'd in the hands that weaved.
Talk to the world of Arden's dazzling lord,
And tales of joyous love go round the board;
Who, though adoring less, by beauty more adored?"

"Ill dost thou read the human heart, my friend,
If bounding man's life with the novel's end;
Where lovers married, ever after love—
To birds alone the turtle and the dove!
Where wicked men (if I be of the gang)
Repent, turn hermits, or cut throats and hang!
Our souls repent,—our lives but rarely change;
Grief halts awhile, then goads us on to range.
More woo'd than wooing, scarce I feign'd to feel—
What magic to the magnet draws the steel?
Wealth soon grew mine, the parasital fame
Conceal'd the nature while it deck'd the name;
Kinsman on kinsman died, each death brought gold;
In birth, wealth, fame, strange charms the sex behold!
The outward grace the life of courts bestows,
The tongue that learns unconsciously to gloze,
All drew to mine the fates I could but mar;
And Aphroditè was my native star!
Forgive the boast, not blessings these, but banes,
If spring sows only flowers, small fruit the autumn gains!
I mark my grave coevals gather round
Their harvest-home, with sheaves for garners bound;
And I, that planted but the garden, see
How the blooms fade! no harvest waits for me!"

"Yet, didst thou never love again? as o'er
The soft stream, gliding by the enamell'd shore,

Didst thou ne'er pause, and in some lovelier vale
Moor thy light prow, and furl thy silken sail?"
"But once," said Arden; "years on years had fled,
And half it soothed to think my Mary dead.
For I had sworn (could faith, could honour less?)
My hearth at least to priestly loneliness;
To wed no other while she lived, and be,
If found at last, for late atonement free.
I kept the vow, till this ambiguous doom,
Half wed, half widow'd, took a funeral gloom;
So many years had pass'd, no tidings gain'd,
The chance so slight that yet the earth retain'd,
At length, though doubtful, I believed that time
Had from the altar ta'en the ban of crime.
Impulse, occasion—what you will, at last
Seized one warm moment to abjure the past.

XII.

"Far other, she, who charm'd me thus awhile,
Thought in each glance, and mind in every smile;
Genius was hers, with all the Iris dyes
That paint on cloud the arch that spans the skies;
Wild in caprice, impassion'd, and yet coy,
Woman when mournful, a frank child in joy;
The Phidian dream, in one concentring all
The thousand spells with which the charmers thrall,
And pleasing most the eye which years begin to pall!
I do not say I loved her as, in truth,
We only love when life is in its youth;
But here at least I thought to fix my doom,
And from the weary waste reclaim a home.
Enough I loved, to woo, to win, to bind
To her my fate, if Heaven had so assign'd!

The nuptial day was fix'd, the plighting kiss
Glow'd on my lips ;—that moment the abyss,
Which, hid by moss-grown time yet yawn'd as wide
Beneath my feet, divorced me from her side.
A letter came—Clanalbin's hand; what made
Treason so bold to brave the man betray'd?
I break the seal—O Heaven! my Mary yet
Lived; in want's weeds the wretch his victim met;
Track'd to her home (a beggar's squalid cell!),
Told all the penitence that lips could tell:
'Come back and plead thyself, and all may yet be well!'
Had I a choice? could I delay to choose?—
Here conscience dragg'd me, there it might excuse!

"Few hurried lines, obscurely dark with all
The war within, my later vows recall,
Breathe passionate prayer—for hopeless pardon sue,
And shape soft words to soothe the stern adieu.
So, as some soul the beckoning ghost obeys,
The haunting shadow of the vanish'd days
Lures to the grave of Youth my charmèd tread,
And sighs, 'At length thou shalt appease the Dead!'

"Scarce had I reach'd the shores of England, ere
New pomps spring round me,—I am Arden's heir!
The last pretender to the princely line,
Whose flag had waved from towers in Palestine,
Borne to our dark Walhalla,—left me poor
In all which sheds a blessing on the boor.—
Yes, thou art right! how, at each sickening grasp,
For the heart's food, had gold befool'd my clasp!
Gorg'd with a satrap's treasure, the soul's dearth
Envied the pauper crawling to his hearth."

"But Mary—she—thy wife before Heaven's eye?"
"Lost as before!" was Arden's anguish-cry;
"Not beggary, famine—not her child (for whom,
What could she hope from earth?—as stern a doom!)
Could bow the steel of that proud chastity,
Which scorn'd as alms the atonement due from me!
Out of the sense of wrong her grandeur grown,
She look'd on shame from Sorrow as a throne.
Once more she fled;—no sign!—again the same
Vain track—vain chase!—Not *here* was I to blame!"

"Thou track the outcast!" mutter'd Morvale!—"No!
Too far from Luxury lies the world of Woe!"

"Henceforth," sigh'd Arden, "hope, aim, end, confined
To one—my heart, if tortured, is resign'd;
So lately seen, oh! sure she liveth yet!
Once found—oh! strong thine eloquence, Regret!
The palace and the coronal, the gauds
With which our vanity our will defrauds,—
These may not tempt her, but the simple words
'I love thee still,' will touch on surer chords,
And youth rush back with that young melody,
To the lone moonlight and the trysting-tree!"

As the tale ceased, the fields behind them lay,—
The huge town once more open'd on the way;
The whir of wheels, the galliard cavalcade;
The crowd of pleasure, and the roar of trade;
The solemn abbey soaring through the dun
And reeking air, in which sunk low the sun;
The dusky trees, the sultry flakes of green;
The haunts where Fashion yawns away the spleen;—
Vista on vista widens to reveal
Ease on the wing, and Labour at the wheel!

The friends grew silent in that common roar,
The Real around them, the Ideal o'er
So the peculiar life of each, the unseen
Core of our being—what we are, have been—
The spirit of our memory and our soul
Sink from the sight, when merg'd amidst the whole;
Yet atom atom never can absorb,
Each drop moves rounded in its separate orb.

. . .

III.

I.

Lord Arden's tale robb'd Morvale's couch of sleep,
The star still trembled on the troubled deep,
O'er the waste ocean gleam'd its chilling glance,
To make more dark the desolate expanse.

This contrast of a fate, but vex'd by gales
Faint with too full a balm from Rhodian Vales ; *
This light of life all squander'd upon one
Round whom hearts moved, as planets round a sun,
Mocks the lone doom *his* barren years endure,
As wasted treasure but insults the poor.
Back on his soul no faithful echoes cast
Those tones which make the music of the past.
No memories hallow, and no dreams restore
Love's lute, far heard from Youth's Hesperian shore ;—
The flowers that Arden trampled on the sod,
Still left the odour where the step had trod ;
Those flowers, so wasted !—had for *him* but smiled
One bud,—its breath had perfumed all the wild !
He own'd the moral of the reveller's life,
So Christian warriors own the sin of strife,—
But, oh ! how few can lift the soul above
Earth's twin-born rulers,—Fame and Woman's Love !

Just in that time, of all most drear, upon
Fate's barren hill-tops, gleam'd the coming sun ;

* The perfumes from the island of Rhodes,—to which the roses that still bloom there gave the ancient name,—are wafted for miles over the surrounding seas.

From nature's face the veil of night withdrawn,
Earth smiled, and Heaven was open'd in the dawn!

How chanced this change?—how chances all below?
What sways the life the moment doth bestow:
An impulse, instinct, look, touch, word, or sigh—
Unlocks the Hades, or reveals the sky.

II.

'Twas eve; Calantha had resumed again
The wonted life, recaptured to its chain;
In the calm chamber, Morvale sate, and eyed
Lucy's lithe shape, that seem'd on air to glide;
Eyed with complacent, not impassion'd, gaze;
So Age looks on, where some fair Childhood plays:
Far as soars Childhood from dim Age's scope,
Beauty to him who links it not with Hope!

"Sing me, sweet Lucy," said Calantha, "sing
Our favourite song—'*The Maiden and the King.*'
Brother, thou lov'st not music, or, at least,
But some wild war-song that recalls the East.
Who loves not music, still may pause to hark
Nature's free gladness hymning in the lark.
As sings the bird sings Lucy! all her art
A voice in which you listen to a heart."

A blush of fear—a coy reluctant, "nay"
Avail her not—thus ran, the simple lay:—

THE MAIDEN AND THE KING.

I.

"And far as sweep the seas below,
My sails are on the deep;
And far as yonder eagles go,
My flag on every keep.

"Why o'er the rebel world within
Extendeth not the chart?
No sail can reach—no arms can win
The kingdom of a heart!"

So sigh'd the king—the linden near;
A listener heard the sigh,
And thus the heart he did not hear,
Breathed back the soft reply:—

II.

"And f r as sweep the seas below,
His sails are on the deep;
And far as yonder eagles go,
His flag on every keep;

"Love, *thou* art not a king alone,
Both slave and king thou art!
Who seeks to sway, must stoop to own
The kingdom of a heart!"

So sigh'd the Maid, the linden near,
Beneath the lonely sky;
Oh, lonely *not*!—for angels hear
The humblest human sigh!

III.

His ships are vanish'd from the main,
His banners from the keep;
The carnage triumphs on the plain;
The tempest on the deep.

"The purple and the crown are mine"—
An Outlaw sigh'd—"no more;
But still as greenly grows the vine
Around the cottage door!

"Rest for the weary pilgrim, Maid!
And water from the spring!"
Before the humble cottage pray'd
The Man that was a King.

Oh, was the threshold that he cross'd
The gate to fairy ground?
He would not for the kingdom lost,
Have changed the kingdom found!

Divine interpreter thou art, O Song!
To thee all secrets of all hearts belong!
How had the lay, as in a mirror, glass'd,
The sullen present and the joyless past,
Lock'd in the cloister of that lonely soul!—
Ere the song ceased, to Lucy's side he stole,
And with the closing cadence, mournfully
Lifted his doubtful gaze:—so eye met eye,

If thou hast lov'd, re-ope the magic book;
Say, do its annals date not from a look?
In which two hearts, unguess'd perchance before,
Rush'd each to each, and were as two no more;
While all thy being—by some Power, above
Its will constrain'd—sigh'd, trembling, "This is Love."

A look! and lo! they knew themselves alone!
Calantha's place was void—the witness gone;
They had not mark'd her sad step glide away,
When in sweet silence sank, less sweet, the lay;
For unto both abruptly came the hour
When springs the rose-fence round the fairy bower;
When earth shut out, all life transferr'd to one,
Each *other* life seems cloud before the sun;
It comes, it goes, we know if it depart
But by the warmer light and quicken'd heart.

And what then chanced? Oh, leave not told, but guess'd;
Is Love a god?—a temple, then, the breast!
Not to the crowd in cold detail allow
Its delicate worship, its mysterious vow!
Around the first sweet homage in the shrine
Let the veil fall, and but the Pure divine!
Coy as the violet shrinking from the sun,
The blush of Virgin Youth first woo'd and won;

And scarce less holy from the vulgar ear
The tone that trembles but with noble fear:
Near to God's throne the solemn stars that move
The proud to meekness, and the pure to love!

Let days pass on; nor count how many swell
The episode of Life's back chronicle!
Changed the abode, of late so stern and drear,
How doth the change speak?—"Love hath entered here!"
How lightly sounds the footfall on the floor!
How jocund rings sweet laughter, hush'd no more!
Wide from two hearts made happy, wide and far,
Circles the light in which they breathe and are;
Liberal as noontide streams the ambient ray,
And fills each crevice in the world with day.

And changed is Lucy! where the downcast eye,
And the meek fear, when that dark man was by?
Lo! as young Una thrall'd the forest-king,
She leads the savage in her silken string;
Plays with the strength to her in service shown,
And mounts with infant whim the woman's throne!
Charm'd from his lonely moods and brooding mind,
And bound by one to union with his kind,
No more the wild man thirsted for the waste;
No more, 'mid joy, a joyless one, misplaced;
His very form assumed unwonted grace,
And bliss gave more than beauty to his face:
Let but delighted thought from all things cull
Sweet food and fair—hiving the Beautiful,
And lo! the form shall brighten with the soul!
The gods bloom only by joy's nectar bowl.

Nor deem it strange that Lucy fail'd to trace
In that dark brow, the birthright of disgrace,
And Europe's ban on Earth's primeval race.

Were she less pure, less harmless, less the child,
Not on the savage had the soft one smiled.
Ev'n as the young Venetian loved the Moor,
Love gains the shrine when Pity opes the door;
Love like the Poet, whom it teaches, where
Round it the Homely dwells, invents the Fair;
And takes a halo from the air it gilds
To crown a Seraph for the Heaven it builds.

And both were children in this world of ours,
Maiden and savage! the same mountain flowers,
Not trimm'd in gardens, not exchanged their hues,
Fresh from the natural sun and hardy dews,
For the faint fragrance and the sickly dyes
Which Art calls forth by walling out the skies:
So children both, each seem'd to have forgot
How poor the maid's—how rich the lover's lot;
Ne'er did the ignorant Indian pause in fear,
Lest friends should pity, and lest foes should sneer.
"What will the world say?"—question safe and sage;
The parrot's world should be his gilded cage;
But fly, frank wilding, with free wings unfurl'd,
Where thy mate carols—there, behold thy world!
And stranger still that no decorous pride
Warn'd her, the beggar, from the rich man's side.
Sneer, ye world-wise, and deem her ignorance art;
She saw her wealth (and blush'd not) in her heart!—
Saw through the glare of gold his lonely breas;
He had but gold, and hers was all the rest.

Pleased in the bliss to her, alas! denied,
Calantha hail'd her brother's plighted bride:
"Glad thou the heart which I made sad," she sigh'd.
Since Arden's tale, but once the friends had met,
Nor known to one the other's rapture yet;
Some fancied clue, some hope awhile restored,
Had from the Babel lured the brilliant lord.
The wonted commune Morvale fail'd to miss,—
We want no confidant in happiness.

Baffled, and sick of hope, wealth, life, and all,
One night return'd the noble to his hall;
He found some lines, stern, brief, in Morvale's hand,—
Brief with dark meaning,—stern with rude command,—
Bidding his instant presence. Arden weigh'd
Each word; some threat was in each word convey'd;
A chill shot through his heart—foreboding he obey'd.

III.

What caused the mandate?—wherefore do I shrink?
The stream runs on,—why tarry at the brink?
Nay, let us halt, and in the pause between
Sorrow and joy, behold the quiet scene;—
The chamber stately in that calm repose,
Which Time's serene, sweet conqueror, ART bestows;
There, in bright shapes which claim our homage still,
Live the grand exiles from the Olympian Hill;
Still the pale Queen Cithæron forests know,
Turns the proud eye, and lifts the deathful bow;
Still on the vast brow of the father-god,
Hangs the hush'd thunder of the awful nod;
Still fair, as when on Ida's mountain seen,
By Troy's young shepherd, Beauty's bashful Queen;

Still Ind's divine Iacchus laughing weaves
His crown of clustering grapes and glossy leaves;
Still thou, Arch-type of Song, ordain'd to soothe
The rest of Heroes, and with deathless youth
Crown the Celestial Brotherhood—dost hold,
Brimm'd with the drink of gods, the urn of gold!

All live again! The Art which images
Man's noblest conquest, as it slowly frees
Thought out of matter, labouring patient on,
Till springs a god-world from reluctant stone,
Charm'd Morvale more than all the pomp and glow
With which the Painter limns a world we know.

'Twas noon, and broken by the gentle gloom
Of coolest draperies, through the shadowy room,
In moted shaft aslant, the curious ray
Forced lingering in, through tiers of flowers, its way,
Glanced on the lute (just hush'd, to leave behind
Elysian dreams, the music of the mind),
Play'd round the songstress, and with warmer flush
Steep'd the young cheek, unconscious of its blush,
And fell, as if in worship, at thy base,
O sculptured Psyche * of the soul-lit face,
Bending to earth resign'd the mournful eye,
Since earth must prove the pathway to the sky;
Doom'd here, below, Love's foot-print to explore
Till Jove relents, the destined wandering o'er,
And in celestial halls, Soul meets with Love once more.†

And, side by side, the lovers sat,—their words
Low mix'd with notes from Lucy's joyous birds,

* The Psyche of Naples, the most intellectual and (so to speak) the most *Christian* of all the dreams of beauty which Grecian art has embodied in the marble.

† Every one knows, through the version of Mrs. Tighe, the lovely al-

Sole witnesses and fit—those airy things,
That, 'midst the bars, can still unfold the wings,
And soothe the cell with language learn'd above;
As the caged bird—so on the earth is love!
Their talk was of the future; from the height
Of Hope, they saw the landscape bathed in light,
And, where the golden dimness veil'd the gaze,
Guess'd out the spot, and mark'd the sites of happy days;
Till silence came, and the full sense and power
Of the blest Present,—the rich-laden Hour
That overshadow'd them, as some hush'd tree
With mellow fruitage bending heavily,—
What time, beneath the tender gloom reclined,
Dies on the lap of summer-noon the wind!

Roused from the lulling spell with startled blush
At such strange power in silence, to the hush
The maid restored the music, while she sought
Fresh banks for that sweet river—loving thought.

"Tell me," she said, "if not too near the gloom
Of some sad tale, the rash desire presume;
What severs so the chords that should entwine
With one warm bond our sister's heart and thine?
Why does she love yet dread thee? what the grief
That shrinks from utterance and disdains relief?
Hast thou not been too stern?—nay, pardon! nay,
Let thy words chide me,—not thy looks dismay!"
"Not unto thee, beneath whose starry eye
Each wild wave hushes, did my looks reply;
They were the answer to mine own dark thought,
Which back the grief, thy smile had banish'd, brought.

legory of Eros and Psyche, which Apuleius—the neglected original, to whom all later romance writers are unconsciously indebted—has bequeathed to the delight of poets and the recognition of Christians.

"Well;—to the secrets of my soul thy love
Hath such sweet right, I lift the veil above
Home's shatter'd gods, and show what wounds belong
To writhing honour and revengeless wrong.—

"Rear'd in the desert, round its rugged child,
All we call life, group'd, menacing and wild;
But to man's soul there is an inner life;
There, one soft vision smiled away the strife!
A fairy shape, that seem'd afar to stand
On the lost shores of Youth—the Fairy land;
A voice that call'd me "brother;"—years had fled
Since my rough breast had pillow'd that sweet head,
Yet still my heart throbb'd with the pressure; still
Tears, such as mothers know, my eyes would fill;
Prayers, such as fathers pray, my soul would breathe;
The oak were sere but for that jasmine-wreath!
At length, wealth came; my footsteps left the wild,—
Again we met:—to woman grown the child:
How did we meet?—that heart to me was dead!
The bird, far heard amidst the waste was fled!
With earthlier fires that breast had learn'd to burn;
And what yet left? but ashes in the urn:
Woo'd and abandon'd! all of love, hope, soul
Lavish'd—now lifeless!—well, were this the whole!
But the good name—the virgin's pure renown—
Woman's white robe, and Honour's starry crown,
Lost, lost, for ever!"
O'er his visage past
His trembling hand,—then, hurriedly and fast,
As one who from the knife of torture swerves,
Then spurns the pang, as pride the weakness nerves,
Resumed—"As yet *that* secret was withheld,
All that I saw, was sorrow that repell'd,—

A dreary apathy, whose death-like chill,
Froze back my heart and left us sever'd still.

"One night I fled that hard indifferent eye;
To crowds, the heart that Home rejects, will fly!—
Gay glides the dance, soft music fills the hall:
I fled, to find, the loneliness through all!
Thou know'st but half a brother's bond I claim,—
My mother's daughter bears her father's name;
My mother's heart had long denied her son,
And loath'd the tie that pride had taught to shun.
My sister's lips, forbid the bond to own,
Left the scorn'd life, a brother breathed, unknown! *
Not even yet the alien blood confest;
Who, in the swart hues of the Eastern guest
And unfamiliar name, could kindred trace
With the young Beauty of the Northern Race?—
Calm in the crowd I stood, when hark, a word
Smote on my ear, and stunn'd the soul that heard!
A sound, with withering laughter muttered o'er,
Blistering the name—O God!—a sister bore;
Nought clear, and nought defined, save scorn alone,—
Not heard the name scorn coupled with her own;
Somewhat of nuptials fix'd, of broken ties,
The foul cause hinted in the vile surmise,
The gallant's fame for conquests, lightly won,
For homes dishonour'd, and for hearts undone:
Not one alone on whom my wrath could seize,
From lip to lip the dizzying slander flees;

* The reader will bear in mind these lines, important to the clearness of the story; and remember that Calantha bore a different name from her half brother—that her mother's unnatural prejudice or pride of race had forbidden her ever to mention that brother's name; and that, therefore, her relationship to Morvale, until he sought her out, was wholly unknown to all: the reader will remember, also, that during Calantha's subsequent residence in Morvale's house, she lived as woman lives in the East, and was consequently never seen by her brother's guests.

No single ribald separate from the herd,
Through the blent hum one stinging tumult stirr'd;
One felt, unseen, infection circling there
A bodiless venom in the common air,
And as the air impalpable!—so seem
The undistinguished terrors of a dream,
Now clear, now dim, transform'd from shape to shape,
The gibbering spectres scare us and escape.

"Fearful the commune, in that dismal night,
Between the souls which could no more unite,—
The lawful anger and the shaming fears,
Man's iron question, woman's burning tears;
All that, once utter'd, rend for aye the ties
Of the close bond God fashion'd in the skies.
I learn'd at last,—for 'midst my wrath, deep trust
In what I loved, left even passion just;
And I believed the word, the lip, the eye,
That to my horrid question flash'd reply;—
I learn'd at last that but the name was stain'd,
Honour was wreck'd, but Purity remain'd.
O pardon, pardon!—if a doubt that scars,
A word that stains, profane such holy ears!
So, oft amidst my loneliness, my heart
Hath communed with itself, and groan'd apart,—
Recall'd that night, and in its fierce despair,
Shaped some full vengeance from the desert air,—
That I forgot what angel, new from Heaven,
Sweet spotless listener, to my side was given!

"But who the recreant lover?—this, in vain
My question sought; that truth not hard to gain;
And my brow darken'd as I breathed the threat
Fierce in her shrinking ear, 'that wrath should reach him yet!'

I left her speechless; when the morning came,
With the fierce pang, writhed the self-tortured frame,
The poison hid by Woe, drain'd by despairing Shame.

"Few words, half blurr'd by shame, the motive clear'd,
For the false wooer, not herself, she feared;
'Accept,' she wrote 'O brother, sternly just,
The life I yield,—but holy be my dust!
Hear my last words, for, *them* Death sanctify!
Forbear his life for whom it soothes to die.
And let my thought, the memory of old time,
The soul that flees the stain, nor knew the crime,
Strike down thine arm! and see me in the tomb,
Stand, like a ghost, between Revenge and Doom!'

"I bent, in agony and awe, above
The broken idol of my boyhood's love.
Echo'd each groan and writhed with every throe,
And cried, 'Live yet! O dove, but brood below,
Hide with thy wings the vengeance and the guilt,
And give my soul thy softness if thou wilt!'
And, as I spoke, the heavy eye unclosed,
The hand press'd mine, and in the clasp reposed,
The wan lip smiled, the weak frame seem'd to win
Strange power against the torture-fire within;
The leach's skill the heart's strong impulse sped,
She lived—she lived:—and my revenge was dead!

"She lived!—and, clasp'd within my arms, I vow'd
To leave the secret in its thunder-shroud,
To shun all question, to refuse all clue,
And close each hope that honour deems its due;
But while she lived!—the weak vow halted there,
Her life the shield to that it tainted mine to spare

"But to have walk'd into the thronging street,
But to have sought the haunt where babblers meet,
But to have pluck'd one idler by the sleeve,
And asked, '*who* woo'd you fair-hair'd bride, to leave?'
And street, and haunt, and every idler's tongue,
Had given the name with which the slander rung—
To me alone,—to *me* of all the throng,
The unnatural silence mask'd the face of wrong.
But I had sworn! and, of myself in dread,
From the loath'd scene, from mine own wrath, I fled.

"We left the land, in this a home we find.
Home! by our hearth the cleaving curse is shrined!
Distrust in her—and shame in me; and all
The unspoken past cold present hours recal;
And unconfiding hearts, and smiles but rife
With the bland hollowness of formal life!
In vain my sacrifice, she fears me still!
Vain her reprieve;—grief barr'd from vent can kill.
And then, and then, (O joy through agony!)
My oath absolves me, and my arm is free!
The lofty soul may oft forgive, I own,
The lighter wrong that smites itself alone;
But vile the nature, that when wrong hath marr'd
All the rich life it was our boast to guard
But weeps the broken heart and blasted name;—
Here the mean pardon were the manhood's shame;
And I were vilest of the vile, to live
To see Calantha's grave—and to forgive:
Forgive!"

There hung such hate upon that word,
The weeping listener shudder'd as she heard,
And sobb'd—

"Hush, hush! lest Man's eternal Foe
Hear thee, and tempt! Oh, never may'st thou know
Beside one deed of Guilt—how blest is guiltless Woe!"
Then, close, and closer, clinging to his side,
Frank as the child, and tender as the bride,
Words—looks—and tears themselves combine the balm,
Lull the fierce pang, and steal the soul to calm!
As holy herbs (that rocks with verdure wreathe,
And fill with sweets the summer air they breathe,)
In winter wither, only to reveal
Diviner virtues—charged with powers to heal,
So are the thoughts of Love!—if Heaven is fair,
Blooms for the earth, and perfumes for the air;—
Is the Heaven dark?—doth sorrow sear the leaf?
They fade from joy to anodynes for grief!
From theme to theme she lures his thought afar,
From the dark haunt in which its demons are;
And with the gentle instinct which divines
Interest more strong than aught which Self entwines
With its own suffering—changed the course of tears,
And led him, child-like, through her own young years.
The silent sorrows of a patient mind—
Grief's loveliest poem, a soft soul resign'd,
Charm'd and aroused—
"O tell me more!" he cried;
"Ev'n from the infant let me trace the bride.
Of thy dear life I am a miser grown,
And grudge each smile that did not gild my own;
Look back—thy *Father?* Canst thou not recal
His kiss, *his* voice? Fair orphan! tell me all."

"My Father? No!" sigh'd Lucy; "at that name
Still o'er my mother's cheek the fever came;

Thus, from the record of each earlier year,
That household tie moved less of love than fear;
Some wild mysterious awe, some undefined
Instinct of woe was with the name entwined.
Lived he?—I knew not; knew not till the last
Sad hours, when Memory struggled to the Past,
And she—my dying mother—to my breast
Clasp'd these twain relics—let them speak the rest!"
With that, for words no more she could command,
She placed a scroll—a portrait—in his hand;
And overcome by memories that could brook
Not ev'n love's comfort,—veil'd her troubled look,
And glided swiftly thence. Nor he detain'd:
Spell bound, his gaze upon the portrait strain'd:
That brow—those features! that bright lip, which smiled
Forth from the likeness!—Found Lord Arden's child!
The picture spoke as if from Mary's tomb,
Death in the smile and mockery in the bloom.
The scroll, unseal'd—address'd the obscurer name
That Arden bore, ere lands and lordship came;
And at the close, to which the Indian's eyes
Hurried, these words:—

"In peace thy Mary dies;
Forgive her sternness in her sacrifice!
It had one merit—*that I loved!* and till
Each pulse is hush'd shall love, yet fly, thee still.
Now take thy child! and when she clings with pride
To the strong shelter of a father's side,
Tell her, a mother bought the priceless right
To bless unblushing her she gave to light;
Bought it as those who would redeem a past
Must buy—by penance, faithful to the last.
Thorns in each path, a grave the only goal,
Glides mine, atoning, to my father's soul!"

What at this swift revealment—dark and fast
As fleets the cloud-wrack, o'er the Indian past?
No more is Lucy free with her sweet dower
Of love and youth! Another has the power
To bar the solemn rite, to blast the marriage bower.
"Will this proud Saxon of the princely line
Yield his heart's gem to alien hands like mine?
What though the blot denies his rank its heir:
The more his pride will bid his love repair
By loftiest nuptials—O supreme despair!
Shall I divulge the secret! shall I rear,
Myself, the barrier, and the bliss so near?"

He scorn'd himself, and raised his drooping crest:
"Mine be Man's honour—leave to God the rest!"
As thus his high resolve, a sudden cry
Startled his heart. He turn'd: Calantha by!
Why on the portrait glares her haggard eye?
"Whose likeness this? Thou know'st not, brother? speak!
What mean that clouded brow—that changing cheek?
Thou know'st not!"

"Yes!"

And as the answer came,
With Death's strong terror shook the sister's frame,
A bitterer pang, an icier shudder, ran
Through *his* fierce nature—

"Dost *thou* know the man?
Ha! his own tale! O dull and blinded! how,
Flash upon flash, descends the lightning now!
Thou, his forsaken—*his!* And I—who—nay!
Look up Calantha; for, befal what may,
He shall——"

The promise, or the threat, was said
To ears already deafen'd as the dead!

His arm but breaks the fall: the panting breast
Yet heaves convulsive through the stifling vest.
The robe, relax'd, bids doubt—if doubt yet be—
Merge the last gleam in starless certainty!
Lo there, the fatal gift of love and woe
Miming without the image graved below—
The same each likeness by each sufferer worn,
Or differing but as noonday from the morn.
In Lucy's portrait, manhood's earliest youth
Shone from the clear eye with a light like truth.
There, play'd that fearless smile with which we meet
The sward that hides the swamp before our feet;
The bright on-looking to the Future, ere
Our sins reflect their own dark shadows there:—
Çalantha's portrait spoke of one in whom,
Young yet in years, the heart had lost its bloom;
The lip of joy the lip of pride had grown;
It smiled—the smile we love to trust had flown.
In the collected eye and lofty mien
The graver power experience brings was seen;
Beautiful both; and if the manlier face
Had lost youth's candid and luxuriant grace,
A charm as fatal as the first it wore,
Pleased less—and yet enchain'd and haunted more.

And this the man to whom his heart had moved!
Whose hand he had clasp'd, whose child he loved!—he loved!
This, out of all the universe—O Fate!
This, the dark orb, round which revolved his hate;
This, the swart star malign, whose baleful ray
Ruled in his House of Life; and day by day,
And hour by hour, upon the tortured past
One withering, ruthless, demon influence cast!

There writhes the victim—there, unmasking, now
The invoked Alecto frowns from Arden's brow.
O'er that fierce nature, roused so late from sleep,
Course the black thoughts, and lash to storm the deep.
Love flies dismay'd—the sweet delusions, drawn
By Hope, fade ghost-like in the lurid dawn;
As when along the parch'd Arabian gloom
Life prostrate falls before the dread Simoom,
No human mercy the strong whirlwind faced,
And its wrath reign'd sole monarch of the waste!

III.

The Hours steal on. Like spectres, to and fro
Hurry hush'd footsteps through the house of woe.
That nameless chill, which tells of life that dies,
Broods o'er the chamber where Calantha lies.

The Hours steal on—and o'er the unquiet might
Of the great Babel—reigns, dishallow'd, Night.
Not, as o'er Nature's world, She comes, to keep
Beneath the stars her solemn tryst with Sleep,
When move the twin-born Genii side by side,
And steal from earth its demons where they glide;
Lull'd the spent Toil—seal'd Sorrow's heavy eyes,
And dreams restore the dews of Paradise;
But Night, discrown'd and sever'd from her twin,
No pause for Travail, no repose for Sin,
Vex'd by one chafed rebellion to her sway,
Flits o'er the lamp-lit streets—a phantom day!
Alone sat Morvale in the House of Gloom,
Alone—no! Death was in the darken'd room;
All hush'd save where, at distance faintly heard,
Lucy's low sob the depth of silence stirr'd;

Or where, without, the swift wheels hurrying by,
Bear those who live—as if life could not die.
Alone he sat! and in his breast began
Earth's deadliest strife—the Angel with the Man!
Not his the light war with its feeble rage
Which prudent scruples with faint passions wage,
(The small heart-conflicts which disturb the wise,
Whom reason succours when the anger tries,
Such as to this meek social ring belong,
In conscience weak, but in discretion strong;)
But that known only to man's franker state,
In love a demigod—a fiend in hate,
Him, not the reason but the instincts lead,
Prompt in the impulse, ruthless in the deed.

And if the wrong might seem too weak a cause
For the fell hate—not his were Europe's laws.—
Some think dishonour, if it halt at crime,
A stingless asp,—what injury in the slime?
As if but this poor clay—this crumbling coil
Of dust for graves—were all the foul can soil!
As if the form were not the type (nor more
Than the mere type) of what chaste souls adore!
That Woman-Royalty, a spotless name,
For sires to boast—for sons unborn to claim,
That heavenly purity of thought—as free
From shame as sin, the soul's virginity,
If these be lost—why what remains?—the form?
Has *that* such worth?—Go, envy then the worm!

And well to him may such belief belong,
And India's memories blacken more the wrong;
In Eastern lands, by tritest tales convey'd,
How Honour-guards from sight itself the maid;

Home's solemn mystery, jealous of a breath,
Screen'd by religion, and begirt with death :—
Again he cower'd beneath the hissing tongue,
Again the gibe of scurril laughter rung,
Again the Plague-breath air itself defiled,
And Mockery grinn'd upon his mother's child!
All the heart's chaste religion overthrown,
And slander scrawl'd upon the altar-stone!

And if that memory pause, what shapes succeed?
The martyr leaning on the broken reed!
The life slow-poison'd in the thoughts that shed
Shame o'er the joyless earth;—and there, the dead!
Marvel not ye, the soft, the fair, the young,
Whose thoughts are chords to Love's sweet music strung,
Whose life the sterner genius—Hate, has spared,
If on his soul no torch but Até's glared!
If in the foe was lost to sight the bride,
The foe's meek child!—that memory was denied!
The face, the tale, the sorrow, and the love,
All fled—all blotted from the breast: Above
The Deluge not one refuge for the Dove!
There is no Lethé like one guilty dream,
It drowns all life that nears the leaden stream;
And if the guilt seem sacred to the creed,
Between the stars and earth, but stands the Deed!
So in his breast the Titan feud began:
Which shall prevail—the Angel or the Man?

The Injurer comes! the lone light breaking o'er
The gloom, waves flickering to the open door,
And Arden's step is on the fatal floor!
Around he gazed, and hush'd his breath,—for Fear
Cast its own shadow on the wall,—a drear

And ominous prescience of the Death-king there
Breathed its chill horror to the heavy air;
O'er yon recess—which bars with draperied pall
The baffled gaze—the unbroken shadows fall.
The lurid embers on the hearth burn low;
The clicking time-piece sounds distinct and slow;
And the roused instinct hate's suspense foreshows
In the pale Indian's lock'd and grim repose.

So Arden enter'd, and thus spoke; the while
His restless eye belied his ready smile:
"Return'd, I find thy mandate, and attend
To hear a mystery, or to serve a friend."
"Or front a foe!"
A stifled voice replied.
O'er Arden's temples flush'd the knightly pride.
"What means that word, which jars, not daunts, the ear?
I own no foe,—if foe there be, no fear."

"Pause and take heed—then with as firm a sound
Disdain the danger—when the foe is found!
What, if thou hadst a sister, whom the grave
To thy sole charge—a sacred orphan—gave—
What, if a traitor had, with mocking vows,
Won the warm heart, and woo'd the plighted spouse,
Then left—a scoff;—what, if his evil fame,
Alone sufficed to blast the virgin name,
What—hourly gazing on a life forlorn,
Amidst a solitude wall'd round with scorn,
Shame at the core—death gnawing at the cheek—
What, from the suitor, would the brother seek?"

"Wert *thou* that brother," with unsteady voice,
Arden replied; "not doubtful were thy choice:
Were I that Suitor——"
"Ay?"
"I would prepare
To front the vengeance, or—the wrong repair."

"Yes"—hiss'd the Indian—"front that mimic strife,
That coward's die, which leaves to chance the life;
That mockery of all justice, framed to cheat
Right of its due—such vengeance thou wouldst meet!—
Be Europe's justice blind and insecure!
Stern Ind asks more—her son's revenge is sure!
'Repair the wrong!'—Ay, in the Grave be wed!
Hark! the Ghost calls thee to the bridal bed!
Come (nay, this once thy hand!)—come!—from the shrine
I draw the veil!—Calantha, he is thine!
Man, see thy victim!—dust!—Joy—Peace and Fame,
These murder'd first—the blow that smote the frame
Was the most merciful!—at length it came.
Here, by the corpse to which thy steps are led,
Beside thee, murderer, stands the brother of the Dead!"

Brave was Lord Arden—brave as ever be
Thor's northern sons—the Island Chivalry;
But in that hour strange terror froze his blood,
Those fierce eyes mark'd him shiver as he stood;
But oh! more awful than the living foe
That frown'd beside—the Dead that smiled below!
That smile which greets the shadow-peopled shore,
Which says to Sorrow—"Thou canst wound no more!"
Which says to Love that would rejoin—"Await!"
Which says to Wrong that would redeem—"Too late!"

That lingering halo of our closing skies
Cold with the sunset never more to rise!

Though his gay conscience many a heavier crime
Than this had borne, and drifted off to Time;
Though this but sport with a fond heart which Fate
Had given to master, but denied to mate,
Yet seem'd it as in that least sin arose
The shapes of all that Memory's deeps disclose;
The general phantom of a life whose waste
Had spoil'd each bloom by which its path was traced,
Sporting at will, and moulding sport to art,
With that sad holiness—the Human Heart!
Upon his lip the vain excuses died,
In vain his manhood struggled for its pride;
Up from the dead, with one convulsive throe,
He turn'd his gaze, and voiceless faced his foe:
Still, as if changed by horror into stone,
He saw those eyes glare doom upon his own;
Saw that remorseless hand glide sternly slow
To the bright steel the robe half hid below,—
Near, and more near, he felt the fiery breath
Breathe on his cheek; the air was hot with death,
And yet he sought not flight—nor strove for prayer,
As one chance-led into a lion's lair,
Who sees his fate, nor deems submission shame,—
Unarm'd to combat, and unskill'd to tame,
What could this social world afford its child,
Against the roused Nemæan of the wild!

A lifted arm—a gleaming steel—a cry
Of savage vengeance!—swiftly—suddenly,
As through two clouds a star—on the dread time
Shone forth an angel face and check'd the startled crime!

She stood, the maiden guest, the plighted bride,
The victim's daughter, by the madman's side;
Her airy clasp upon the murtherous arm,
Her pure eyes chaining with a solemn charm:
Like some blest thought of mercy, on a soul
Brooding on blood—the holy Image stole!
And, as a maniac in his fellest hour
Lull'd by a look whose calmness is its power,
Backward the Indian quail'd—and dropp'd the blade!—
To see the foeman kneeling to the maid;
As with new awe and wilder, Arden cried,
"Out from the grave, O com'st thou, injured bride!"
Then with a bound he reach'd the Indian—
"Lo!
I tempt thy fury, and invite thy blow;
But, by man's rights o'er men,—oh, speak! whose eyes
Ope, on life's brink, my youth's lost paradise?
The same—the same—(look, look!)—the same—lip, brow,
Form, aspect,—all and each—fresh, fair as now,
Bloom'd my heart's bride!"—
Silent the Indian heard,
Nor seem'd to feel the grasp, nor heed the word!
As when some storm-beat argosy glides free
From its vain wrath,—subsides a baffled sea,—
His heaving breast calm'd back—the tempest fell,
And the smooth surface veil'd the inward hell.
Yet his eye, resting on the wondering maid,
Somewhat of woe, perchance remorse, betray'd,
And grew to doubtful trouble—as it saw
Her aspect brightening slowly from its awe,
Gazing on Arden till shone out commix'd,
Doubt, hope, and joy, in the sweet eyes thus fix'd;—

Till on her memory all the portrait smil'd,
And voice came forth, "O Father, bless thy child!"

As from the rock the bright wave leaps to day,
The mighty instinct forced its living way:
No need of further words;—all clear—all told;
A father's arms the happy child enfold:
Nature alone was audible!—and air
Stirr'd with the gush of tears, and gasps of murmur'd prayer!

Motionless stands the Indian; on his breast,
As one the death-shaft pierces, droops his crest;
His hands are clasp'd—one moment the sharp thrill
Shakes his strong limbs;—then all once more is still;
And form and aspect the firm calmness take
Which clothes his kindred savage at the stake.
So—as she turn'd her looks—the woe behind
That quiet mask, the girl's quick heart divined,—
"Father!" she cried—"Not all, not all on me
Lavish thy blessings!—Him, who saved me, see!
Him who from want—from famine—from a doom,
Frowning with terrors darker than the tomb,
Preserved thy child!"

Before the Indian's feet
She fell, and murmur'd—"Bliss is incomplete
Unless thy heart can share—thy lips can greet!"
Again the firm frame quiver'd;—roused again,
The bruised eagle struggled from the chain;
Till words found way, and with the effort grew
Man's crowning strength—Man's evil to subdue.

"Foeman—'tis past!—lo, in the strife between
Thy world and mine, the eternal victory seen!

Thou, with light arts, my realm hast overthrown,
And, see, revenge but threats to bless thine own!
My home is desolate—my hearth a grave—
The Heaven one hour that seem'd like justice gave,
The arm is raised, the sacrifice prepared—
The altar kindles, and the victim 's—spared!
Free as before to smite and to destroy,
Thou com'st to slaughter to depart in joy!

"From the wayside yon drooping flower I bore;
Warm'd at my heart—its root grew to the core,
Dear as its kindred bloom seen through the bar·
By some long-thrall'd, and loneliest prisoner—
Now comes the garden's Lord, transplants the flower,
And spoils the dungeon to enrich the bower?

"So be it, law—and the world's rights are thine
Lost the stern comfort, Nature's law and mine!
She calls thee 'Father,' and the long-deferr'd,
Long-look'd for vengeance, withers at the word!
Take back thy child! Earth's gods to thee belong!
To me the iron of the sense of wrong
Heaven makes the heart which Earth oppresses—
strong!"

"Not so,—not so we part! O *husband!*" cried
The Girl's full soul—"Divorce not thus thy bride!
Yes, Father, yes!—in woe thy Lucy won
This generous heart; shall joy not leave us one?"

A moment Arden paused in mute surprise
(How charm'd that outcast Beauty's blinded eyes?)
Then, with the impulse of the human thought,
Prompt to atonement for the evil wrought,

"Hear her!" he said—"her words her father's heart
Echoes.—Not so—nor ever, may ye part!
Nobly, hast thou an elder right than mine
Won to this treasure;—still its care be thine;
Withhold thy pardon if thou wilt,—but take
The holiest offering wrong to man can make!"

Slowly the Indian lifts his joyless head,
Pointing with slow hand to the present dead,
And from slow lips comes heavily the breath:
"Behold, between us evermore—is Death!"

"Maiden, recal my tale;—thou clasp'st the hand
Which shuts the Exile from the promised land;
Can the dead victim's brother, undefiled,
From him who slew the sister take the child!"
With that, he bent him o'er the shuddering maid,
On her fair locks a solemn hand he laid;
Lifted eyes, tearless still—but dark with all
The cloud, that not in *such* soft dews can fall:
"If to the Dead an offering still must be,
All vengeance calls for be fulfill'd in me!
I make myself the victim!—Thou dread Power
Guiding to guilt the slow chastising hour,
Far from the injurer's hearth by her made pure,
Let this lone roof thy thunder-stroke allure!—

"Go hence—(nay, near me not!) behold!—the kind
Oblivion closes round her darken'd mind;
If, when she wake, it be awhile for grief,
Soon dries the rain-drop on the April leaf!"

He said, and vanish'd, with a noiseless tread,
Within the folds which curtain'd round the dead!

So, the stern Dervish of the East inters
His sullen soul with Death in sepulchres!

His new-found prize, while yet th' unconscious sense
Sleeps in the mercy of the brief suspense,
With gliding feet, the Father steals away.
Grief bends alone above the lonely clay;
But over grief and death th' Eternal Eye
Shines down,—and Hope lives ever in the sky.

IV.

I.

To Joy's brisk ear there's music in the throng;
Glorious the life of cities to the strong!
What myriad charms, all differing, smile for all
The hardier Masks in the Great Carnival!
Amidst the vast disguise, some sign betrays
To each the appointed pleasure in the maze;
Ambition, pleasure, love, applause, and gold,
Allure the young, and baby* yet the old.
For here, the old, if nerves and stubborn will
Defy Experience, linger, youthful still,
Haunt the same rounds of idlesse, or of toil
That lure the freshest footsteps to the soil,
Still sway the Fashion or control the State,
Gay at the ball, or fierce at the debate.
It is not youth, it is the zest of life
Surviving youth—in age itself as rife,
That fits the Babel and enjoys the strife;
But not for you *our* world's bright tumults are,
Soft natures, born beneath the Hesperus star,—
To us, the storm is but the native breath;
To you, the quickening of the gale is death;
Leave Strife to battle with its changeful clime,
And seek the peace which saves the weak, in time!
Not Man's but Nature's world be yours!—The shade
Where, all unseen, the cushat's nest is made,
Less lone to you than pomps which but bestow
The tinkling cymbal and the painted show.

* "At best it *babies* us."—YOUNG.

The lights of revel flash from Arden's halls;
There, throng the shapes that troop where Comus calls;
But not Sabrina more apart and lone
From the loud joy, on her pure coral throne,
Than thou, sad maiden!—round the holy tide
Swell the gay notes, the airy dancers glide;
But o'er the shadowy grot the waters roll,
And shut the revel from the unconscious soul!

What rank has noblest, manhood's grace most fair,
Bend low to her now hail'd as Arden's heir?
If rumour doubts the birthright to his name,
The father's wealth redeems the mother's shame;
And kindly thoughts o'er lordly pride prevail,
"The Earl's best lands are not in the entail!"

How Arden loved his child!—how spoke that love
Of those dead worlds the light herb waves above;
Layer upon layer—those strata of the past,
Those gone creations buried in the last!
Their bloom, their life, their glory past away,
Speak in this relic of a vanish'd day.
There, in that guileless face, revived anew
The visions glistening through life's morning dew,
Fair Hope, pure Honour, undefilëd Truth—
The young shape stood before him as his youth! *
And in this love his chastisement was found—
The thorns he had planted, here enclosed him round;
He, whom to see had been to love,—in vain
Here loved; that heart no answer gave again—
It lived upon the past,—it dwelt afar,
This new-found bond from what it loved the bar.

* "For, oh! he stood before me as my youth."
COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

Her conscience chid, yet, while it chid, her thought
Still the cold past, to freeze the present, brought;
How love the sire round whom such shadows throng,
The mother's death-bed and the lover's wrong?
The dazzling gifts, which had through life beguiled
All other souls, are powerless with his child.
Vain the melodious tongue, and vain the mind,
Sparkling and free as wavelets in the wind;
The roseate wreath the handmaid Graces twine
Round sternest hearts,—soft infant, breaks on thine;
Child, candid, simple, frank, to her allied,
Far more, the nature sever'd from her side,
With its fresh instincts and wild verdure, fann'd
By fragrant winds, from haunted Fable-land;
Then all the garden graces which betray
By the bough's riches the worn tree's decay.
What charms the ear of Childhood?—not the page
Of that romance which wins the sober sage;
Not the dark truths, like warning ghosts, which pass
Along the pilgrim path of *Rasselas;*
Not wit's wrought crystal which, so coldly clear,
Reflects, in *Zadig*, learning's icy sneer;
Unreasoning, wondering, stronger far the thrall
Of Aimée's cave,* or young Aladdin's hall;
And so the childhood of the heart will find
Charms in the poem of a child-like mind,
To which the vision of the world is blind!
Ev'n as the savage, 'midst the desert's gloom,
Sees, hid from us, the golden fruitage bloom,
And, where the arid silence wraps us all,
Lists the soft lapse of the glad waterfall!

* The beautiful story of Aimée—the delight of all children—is in the collection entitled "The Temple of the Fairies."

So Lucy loved not Arden!—vainly yearn
His moisten'd eyes;—Can softness be so stern?
That soul how gentle! but that smile how cold!
A marble shape the parent arms enfold!
No hurrying footstep bounds his own to meet,
No joyous smiles with morning's welcome greet,
Not him that heart—so bless'd with love—can bless,
Lost the pure Eden of a child's caress;
He saw—he felt, and suffer'd, powerless!
Remorse seized on him;—his gay spirit quail'd;
The cloud crept on,—it gather'd,—it prevail'd.
The spectre of the past—the martyr bride,
Sat at his board, and glided by his side;
Sigh'd, "With the dead, Love the Consoler dies,"
And spoke his sentence in his child's cold eyes!
And now a strange and strong desire was born,
With the young instinct of life's credulous morn,
In that long sceptic-breast, so world-corrupt and worn.

From the rank soil in which grim London shrouds
Her dead,—the green halls of the ghastly crowds—
To bear his Mary's dust; the dust to lay
By the clear rill, beside her father's clay,
Amidst those scenes which saw the rapture-strife
And growth of passion—life's sweet storm of life,
Consign the silent pulse, the mouldering heart,
Deaf to the joy to meet—the woe to part;
Rounding and binding there as into one
Sad page, the tale of all beneath the sun;
And there, before that grave—beneath the beam
Of the lone stars, and by that starlit-stream,
To lead the pledge of the fresh morn of love,
And while the pardoning skies seem'd soft above,

Murmur, "For her sake, her, who, reconciled,
Hears us in heaven, give me thy heart, my child!"
But first—before his conscious soul could dare
For the consoling balm to pour the prayer,
Alone the shadows of the past to brave,
Alone to commune with the accusing grave,
And shrive repentance of its haunting gloom
Before Life's true Confessional—the Tomb;—
Such made his dream!—Oh! not in vain the creed
Of old that knit atonement with the dead!
The penitent offering, the lustrating tide,
The wandering, haunted, hopeful homicide,
Who sees the spot to which the furies urge,
Where halt the hell-hounds, and where drops the scourge,
And the appeased Manes pitying sigh—
"Thou hast atoned! once more enjoy the sky!"

Such made the dream he rushes to fulfil!—
Round the new mound babbled the living rill;
A name, the name that Arden's wife should bear,
Sculptured the late and vain repentance there.
O'er the same bridge which once to rapture led,
Went the same steps their pathway to the dead:
Night after night the same lone shadow gave
A tremulous darkness to the hurrying wave;
Lost,—and then, lengthening from the neighbouring yews,
Dimm'd the wan shimmer of the moonlit dews,
Then gain'd a grave;—and from the mound was thrown,
Still as the shadow of yon funeral stone!

II.

Meanwhile to Morvale—Sorrow, like the wind
Through trees, stirs varying o'er each human mind;
Uprooting some, from some it doth but strew
Blossom and leaf, which spring restores anew;
From some, but shakes rich powers unknown in calm,
And wakes the trouble to extract the balm.
Let weaker natures suffer and despair,
Great souls snatch vigour from the stormy air;
Grief not the languor,—Grief the action brings;
And clouds the horizon but to nerve the wings.

Up from his heavy thought, one dawning day,
The Indian, silent, rose, and went his way;
Palace and pomp and wealth and ease resign'd,
As one new-born, he plunged amidst his kind,
Whither, with what intent, he scarce divined.
He turn'd to see, through mists obscure and dun,
The domes and spires of the vex'd Babylon;
Before him smiled the mead and waved the corn,
And Nature's music swell'd the hymns of Morn.
A sense of freedom, of the large escape
From the pent walls our customs round us shape;
The imperfect sympathies which curse the few,
Who ne'er the chase the many join pursue;
The trite convention, with its cold control,
Which thralls the habit, yet not links the soul;
—The sense of freedom pass'd into his breast,
But found no hope it flatter'd and caress'd;
So the sad captive, when at length made free,
Shrinks from the sunlight he had pined to see;

Feels on the limb the custom of the chain,
Each step a struggle and each breath a pain,
And knows—return'd unto the world too late,
No smile shall greet him at his lonely gate;
Seal'd every eye, of old that watch'd and wept;
The world he knew has vanish'd while he slept!

He wander'd on, alone, on foot,—alone,
As in the waste his earlier steps had known.
Forth went the peasant—Adam's curse begun;—
Home went the peasant in the western sun;
He heard the bleating fold, the lowing herd,
The last shrill carol of the nestling bird!
He saw the rare lights of the hamlet gleam
And fade;—the stars grow stiller on the stream;
Swart, by the woodland, cower'd the gipsy tent
Whence peer'd dark eyes that watch'd him as he went—
He paused and turn'd:—Him more the outlaws charm
Than the trim hostel and the happy farm.
Strangers, like him, from antique lands afar,
Aliens untamed where'er their wanderings are,
High Syrian sires of old;*—dark fragments torn
From the great creed of Isis,—now forlorn
In rags—all earth their foe, and day by day
Worn in the strife with social Jove away—
Wretched 'tis true, yet less enslaved, their strife,
Than our false peace with all this masque of life,
Convention's lies,—the league with Custom made,
The crimes of glory, and the frauds of trade.
Rest and rude food the lawless Nomads yield;
The dews rise ghost-like from the whitening field,

* According to the exploded hypothesis of Voltaire, that the Gipsies are a Syrian tribe, the remains of the long scattered fraternity of Isis.

And ghost-like on the wanderer glides the sleep
Through which the phantom Dreams their witching
Sabbat keep!

At dawn, while yet, around the Indian, lay
The dark, fantastic groups,—resumed the way;
Before his steps the landscape spreads more free
And fresh from man;—ev'n as a broadening sea,
When, more and more the harbour left behind,
The lone sail drifts before the strengthening wind.
Behold the sun!—how stately from the East,
Bright from God's presence, comes the glorious Priest!
Deck'd as beseems the Mighty One to whom
Heaven gives the charge to hallow and illume!
How, as he comes,—through the Great Temple, EARTH,
Peels the rich Jubilee of grateful mirth!
The infant flowers their odour-censers swinging,
Through aisled glades Air's Anthem-Chorus ringing;
While, like some soul lifted aloft by love,
High and alone the sky-lark halts above,
High, o'er the sparkling dews, the glittering corn,
Hymns his frank happiness and hails the morn!

He stands upon the green hill's lighted brow,
And sees the world at smiling peace below,
Hamlet and farm, and thy best type, Desire
Of the sad Heart,—the heaven-ascending spire!

He stood and mused, and thus his musing ran:—
"How strong, how feeble, is thine art, O Man!
Thou coverest Earth with wonders—at thy hand
Curbs the meek water, blooms the subject land:
Why halts thy magic here?—Why only deck'd
Earth's sterile surface, mournful Architect?

Why art thou powerless o'er the world within?
Why raise the Eden, yet retain the sin?
Why, while the earth, thou but enjoy'st an hour,
Proclaims thy splendour and attests thy power,
Why o'er the spirit does thy sorcery cease?—
Lo the sweet landscape round thee lull'd in peace!
Why wakes each heart to sorrow, care, and strife?
Why with yon temple so at war the life?
Why all so slight the variance, or in grief
Or guilt,—the sum of suffering and relief,
Between the desert's son whose wild content
Redeems no waste, enthralls no element,
And ye the Magians?—ye the giant birth
Of Lore and Science—Brahmins of the Earth?
Behold the calm steer drinking in the stream,
Behold the glad bird glancing in the beam,
Say, know ye pleasure,—ye, the Eternal Heirs
Of stars and spheres—life's calm content, like theirs?
Your stores enrich, your powers exalt, the few,
And curse the millions wealth and power subdue;
And ev'n the few!—what lord of luxury knows
The joy in strife, the sweetness in repose,
Which bless the houseless Arab?—Still behind
Ease waits Disgust, and with the falling wind
Droop the dull sails ordained to speed the mind.
Increasing wants the sum of care increase,
The piled-up knowledge but sepulchres peace,
Ye quell the instincts, the free love, frank hate,
And bid hard Reason hold the scales of Fate—
What is your gain?—from each slain instinct springs
A hydra passion, poisoning while it stings;
Free love, foul lust;—the frank hate's manly strife
A plotting mask'd dissimulating life;—

Truth flies the world—one falsehood taints the sky,
Each form a phantom, and each word a lie!

"Yet what am I?—the crush'd and baffled foe,
Who dared the strife, yet would denounce the blow.
What arms had I against this world to wield?
What mail the naked savage heart to shield?
To this hoar world I brought the trusts of youth,
Warm zeal for men, and fix'd repose in truth—
Amongst the young I look'd for young desires,
Love which adores, and Honour which aspires—
Amongst the old, for souls set free from all
The earthlier chains which young desires enthral,
Serene and gentle both to soothe and chide,
The sires to pity, yet the seers to guide—
And lo! this civilised and boasted plan,
This order'd ring and harmony of man,
One hideous, cynic, levelling orgy, where
Youth Age's ice, and Age Youth's fever share—
The unwrinkled brow, the calculating brain,
The passion balanced with the weights of gain,
And Age more hotly clutching than the boy
At the lewd bauble and the gilded toy.

"Why should I murmur?—why accuse the strong?
I own Earth's law—the conquer'd are the wrong,
Am I ambitious?—in this world I stand
Closed from the race, an Alien in the land.
Dare I to love?—O soul, O heart, forget
That dream, that frenzy!—what is left me yet?
Revenge!"—His dark eyes flash'd—yet straightway died
The passionate lightning—"No!—revenge denied!
All the wild man in the tame slave is dead,
The currents stagnate in the girded bed!

Back to my desert!—yet, O sorcerer's draught,
O smooth false world,—what soul that once has quaff'd,
Renounces not the ancient manliness?
Now, could the Desert the charm'd victim bless!
Can the caged bird, escaped from bondage, share
As erst the freedom of the hardy air?
Can the poor peasant lured by Wealth's caprice
To marts and domes, find the old native peace
In the old hut?—on-rushing is the mind:
It ne'er looks back on what it leaves behind.
Once cut the cable and unfurl the sail,
And spreads the boundless sea, and drifts the hurrying gale!

"Come then, my Soul, thy thoughts thy desert be!
Thy dreams thy comrades!—I escape to thee!
Within, the gates unbar, the airs expand,
No bound but Heaven confines the Spirit's Land!
Such luxury yet as what of Nature lives
In Art's lone wreck, the lingering instinct gives;
Joy in the sun, and mystery in the star,
Light of the Unseen, commune with the Far;
Man's law,—his fellow, ev'n in scorn, to save,
And hope in some just World beyond the Grave!"

So went he on, and day succeeds to day,
Untired the step, though purposeless the way;
At night his pause was at the lowliest door,
The beggar'd heart makes brothers of the Poor;
They who most writhe beneath Man's social wrong,
But love the feeble when they hate the strong.
Laud not to me the optimists who call
Each knave a brother—Parasites of all—
Praise not as genial his indifferent eye,
Who lips the cant of mock philanthropy;

He who loathes ill must more than half which lies
In this ill world with generous scorn despise;
Yet of the wrong he hates, the grief he shares,
His lip rebuke, his soul compassion, wears;
The Hermit's wrath bespeaks the Preacher's hope
Who loves men most—men call the Misanthrope!

At times with honest toil reposed—at times
Where gnawing wants beset despairing crimes,
Both still betray'd the sojourn of his soul,
Here wise to cheer, there fearless to control.
His that strange power the Church's Fathers had
To awe the fierce and to console the sad;
For he, like them, had sinn'd;—like them had known
Life's wild extremes;—their trials were his own!
Were we as rich in charity of deed
As gold—what rock would bloom not with the seed?
We give our alms, and cry—"What can we more?"
One hour of time were worth a load of ore!
Give to the ignorant our own wisdom!—give
Sorrow our comfort,—lend to those who live
In crime, the counsels of our virtue,—share
With souls our souls, and Satan shall despair!
Alas, what converts one man, who would take
The cross and staff, and house with Guilt, could make!

Still, in his breast, 'midst much that well might shame
The virtues Christians in themselves proclaim,
There dwelt the Ancient Heathen;—still as strong
Doubts in Heaven's justice,—curses for man's wrong.
Revenge, denied indeed, still rankled deep
In thought—and dimm'd the day, and marr'd the sleep.
And there were hours when from the hell within
Faded the angel that had saved from sin;

When the fell Fury, beckoning through the gloom,
Cried "Life for life—thou hast betray'd the tomb!"
For the grim Honour of the ancient time
Deem'd vengeance duty and forgiveness crime;
And the stern soul fanatic conscience scared,
For blood *not* shed, and injury weakly spared;—
Woe, if in hours like these, O more than woe,
Had the roused tiger met the pardon'd foe!

Nor when his instinct of the life afar
Soar'd from the soil and task'd the unanswering star,
Came more than *Hope*—that reflex-beam of Faith—
That fitful moonlight on the unknown path;
And not the glory of the joyous sun,
That fills with light whate'er it shines upon;
From which the smiles of God as brightly fall
On the lone charnel as the festive hall!

Now Autumn closes on the fading year,
The chill wind moaneth through the woodlands sere;
At morn the mists lie mournful on the hill,—
The hum of summer's populace is still!
Hush'd the rife herbage, mute the choral tree,
The blithe cicala, and the murmuring bee;
The plashing reed, the furrow on the glass
Of the calm wave, as by the bank you pass
Scaring the lazy trout,—delight no more;
The god of fields is dead—Pan's lusty reign is o'er!
Solemn and earnest—yet to holier eyes
Not void of glory, arch the sober'd skies
Above the serious earth!—The changes wrought
Type our own change from passion into thought.
What though our path at every step is strewn
With leaves that shadow'd in the summer noon

Through the clear space more vigorous comes the air,
And the star pierces where the branch is bare.
What though the birds desert the chiller light;
To' brighter climes the wiser speed their flight.
So happy Souls at will expand the wing,
And, trusting Heaven, re-settle into Spring.]

An old man sat beneath the yellowing beech,
Vow'd to the Cross, and wise the Word to teach.
A patriarch priest, from earth's worst tempters pure,
Gold and Ambition!—sainted and obscure!
Before his knee (the Gospel in his hands,
And sunshine at his heart), a youthful listener stands!

The old man spoke of Christ—of Him who bore
Our form, our woes;—that man might evermore
In succouring woe-worn man, the God, made Man, adore!
"My child," he said, "in the far-heathen days,
Hope was a dream, Belief an endless maze;
The wise perplex'd, yet still with glimpse sublime
Of ports dim-looming o'er the seas of Time
Guess'd HIM unworshipp'd yet—the Power above,
Or Dorian Phœbus, or Pelasgic Jove!
Guess'd the far realm, not won by Charon's oar,
Not the pale joys the brave who gain abhor;
No cold Elysium where the very Blest
Envy the living and deplore the rest;*

* Whoever is well acquainted with the heathen learning must often have been deeply impressed with the mournful character of the mythological Elysium. Even the few admitted to the groves of asphodel, unpurified by death, retain the passions and pine with the griefs of life; they envy the mortal whom the poet brings to their moody immortality; and, amidst the disdained repose, sigh for the struggle and the storm.

Where ev'n the spirit, as the form, a ghost,
Dreams back life's conflicts on the shadowy coast,
Hears but the clashing steel, the armëd train,
And waves the airy spear, and murders hosts again!
More just the prescience of the eternal goal,
Which gleam'd 'mid Cyprian shades, on Zeno's soul,
Or shone to Plato in the lonely cave;
God in all space, and life in every grave!
Wise lore and high,—but for the *few* conceived;
By schools discuss'd, but not by crowds believed.
The angel-ladder touch'd the heavenly steep,
But at its foot the patriarchs did but sleep;
They did not preach to nations 'Lo your God;'
No thousands follow'd where their footsteps trod;
Not to the fisherman they said 'Arise!'
Not to the lowly they reveal'd the skies;—
Aloof and lone their shining course they ran
Like stars too high to gild the world of man:*
Then, not for schools—but for the human kind—
The uncultured reason, the unletter'd mind;
The poor, the oppress'd, the labourer, and the slave,
God said, 'Be light!'—and light was on the Grave!
No more alone to sage and hero given,
Ope for all life the impartial Gates of Heaven!
Enough hath Wisdom dream'd, and Reason err'd,
All they would seek is found!—O'er Nature sleeps the Word!

* Not only were the lofty and cheering notions of the soul, that were cherished by the more illustrious philosophers of Greece, confined to a few, but even the grosser and dimmer belief in a future state, which the vulgar mythology implied, was not entertained by the multitude. Plato remarked that few, even in his day, had faith in the immortality of the soul; and indeed the Hades of the ancients was not for the Many. Amongst those condemned, we find few criminals, except the old Titans, and such as imitated them in the one crime—blasphemy to the fabled gods: And the dwellers of Elysium are chiefly confined to the poets and the heroes, the oligarchy of earth.

"Thou ask'st why Christ, so lenient to the *deed*,
So sternly claims the *faith* which founds the creed;
Because, reposed in faith the soul has calm;
The hope a haven, and the wound a balm;
Because the light, dim seen in Reason's Dream,
On all alike, through faith alone, could stream.
God will'd support to Weakness, joy to Grief,
And so descended from his throne—BELIEF!
Nor this alone—Have faith in things above,
The unseen Beautiful of Heavenly Love;
And from that faith what virtues have their birth,
What spiritual meanings gird, like air, the Earth!
A deeper thought inspires the musing sage;
To youth what visions—what delights to age!
A loftier genius wakens in the world,
To starrier heights more vigorous wings unfurl'd.
No more the outward senses reign alone,
The soul of Nature glides into our own.
To reason less is to imagine more;
They most aspire who meekly most adore!

"Therefore the God-like Comforter's decree—
'His sins be loosen'd who hath faith in me.'
Therefore he shunn'd the cavils of the wise,
And made no schools the threshold of the skies:
Therefore he taught no Pharisee to preach
His Word—the simple let the simple teach.
Upon the infant on his knee he smiled,
And said to Wisdom, 'Be once more a child!'"

The boughs behind the old man gently stirr'd,
By one unseen those Gospel accents heard;
Before the preacher bow'd the pilgrim's head:
"Heaven to this bourne my rescued steps hath led,

Grieving, perplex'd—benighted, yet with dim
Hopes in God's justice,—be my guide to Him!
In vain made man, I mourn and err!—restore
Childhood's pure soul, and ready trust, once more!"
The old man on the stranger gazed;—unto
The stranger's side the young disciple drew,
And gently clasp'd his hand;—and on the three
The western sun shone still and smilingly;
But, round—behind them—dark and lengthening lay
The massive shadow of the closing day.
"See," said the preacher, "Darkness hurries on,
But Man, toil-wearied, grieves not for the Sun;
He knows the light that leaves him shall return,
And hails the night because he trusts the morn!
Believe in God as in the Sun,—and, lo!
Along thy soul, morn's youth restored shall glow!
As rests the earth, so rest, O troubled heart,
Rest, till the burthen of the cloud depart;
Rest, till the gradual veil, from Heaven withdrawn,
Renews thy freshness as it yields the dawn!"

Behold the storm-beat wanderer in repose!
He lists the sounds at which the Heavens unclose,
Gleam, through expanding bars, the angel-wings,
And floats the music borne from seraph-strings.
Holy the oldest creed which Nature gives,
Proclaiming God where'er Creation lives;
But *there* the doubt will come!—the clear design
Attests the Maker and suggests the Shrine;
But in that visible harmonious plan,
What present shows the *future* world to man?
What lore detects, beneath our crumbling clay,
A soul exiled, and journeying back to day;

What knowledge, in the bones of charnel urns,
The etherial spark, the undying thought, discerns?
How from the universal war, the prey
Of life on life, can love explore the way?
Search the material tribes of earth, sea, air,
And the fierce SELF that strives and slays is there.
What but that SELF to Man doth Nature teach?
Where the charm'd link that binds the all to each?
Where the sweet Law—(doth Nature boast its birth)—
"Good will to man, and charity to earth?"
Not in the world without, but that within,
Reveal'd, not instinct—soul from sense can win!
And where the Natural halts, where cramp'd, confined,
The seen horizon bounds the baffled mind,
The Inspired begins—the onward march is given;
Bridging all space, nor ending ev'n in Heaven!
There, veil'd on earth, we mark divinely clear,
Duty and end—the There explains the Here!
We see the link that binds the future band,
Foeman with foeman gliding hand in hand;
And feel that Hate is but an hour's—the son
Of earth, to perish when the earth is done—
But Love eternal; and we turn below,
To hail the brother where we loathed the foe;
There, in the soft and beautiful Belief;
Flows the true Lethé for the lips of Grief;
There, Penury, Hunger, Misery, cast their eyes,
How soon the bright Republic of the Skies!
There, Love, heart-broken, sees prepared the bower,
And hears the bridal step, and waits the nuptial hour!
There, smiles the mother we have wept! there bloom
Again the buds asleep within the tomb;
There, souls regain what hearts had lost before
In that fix'd moment call'd the—Evermore!

Refresh'd in that soft baptism, and reborn,
The Indian woke, and on the world was morn!
All things seem'd new—rose-colour'd in the skies
Shone the hoar peaks of the old memories;
No more enshrouded with unbroken gloom
Calantha's injured name and early tomb—
No more with woe (how ill-suppress'd by pride!)
Thought sounds the gulf that parts the promised bride!
Faithful no less to Death, and true to Love,
This blooms again—that shall rejoin, above!
The Stoic courage had the wound conceal'd;
The Christian hope the wound's sharp torture heal'd.
As rude the waste, but now before him shone
The star;—he rose, and cheerful journey'd on,
Full of the God most with us when alone!

III.

'Tis night,—a night by fits now foul, now fair,
As speed the cloud-wracks through the gusty air:
At times the wild blast dies—and high and far,
Through chasms of cloud, looks down the solemn star—
Or the majestic moon;—so watchfires mark
Some sleeping War dim-tented in the dark;
Or so, through antique Chaos and the storm
Of Matter, whirl'd and writhing into form,
Pale angels peer'd!
Anon, from brief repose
The winds leap forth, the cloven deeps reels;
Mass upon mass, the hurtling vapours driven,
As one huge blackness walls the earth from heaven!—
In one of these brief lulls—you see, serene,
The village church spire 'mid its mounds of green,

The scatter'd roof-tops of the hamlet round,
And the swoll'n rill that girds the holy ground.

A plank that rock'd above the rushing wave,
The dizzy pathway to a wanderer gave;
There, as he paused, from the lone churchyard, slow
Emerged a form the wanderer's eyes should know!
It gains the opposing margent of the stream,
Full on the face shines calm the crescent beam;
It halts upon the bridge! Now, Indian, learn
If in thy soul the heathen yet can yearn!
Swift runs the wave, the instinct and the hour,
The lonely night, when evil thoughts have power,
The foe before thee, and no things that live
To witness vengeance—Canst thou still forgive?
Scarce seen by each the face of each—when, deep
O'er the lost moon, the cloud's loud surges sweep;
Yea, as a sea devours the fated bark,
Vanish'd the heaven, and closed the abyss of dark!
You heard the roaring of the mighty blast,
The groaning trees uprooted as it pass'd
The wrath and madness of the starless rill,
Swell'd by each torrent rushing from the hill.
The slight plank creaks—high mount the waves and high,
Hark! with the tempest's shrieks the human cry!
Upon the bridge but *one* man now!—below,
The night of waters and the drowning foe!
The Indian heard the death-cry and the fall;
Still o'er the wild scene hung the funeral pall!
What eye can pierce the darkness of the wave?
What hand guide rescue through the roaring grave?
Not for such craven questions pause the brave!
Again the moon!—again the churchyard's green,

Spire, hamlet, mead, and rill distinct are seen;
But on the bridge *no* form, no life!—The beam
Shoots wan and broken on the tortured stream;
Vague, indistinct, what yonder moveth o'er
The troubled tide, and struggles to the shore?
Hark, where the sere bough of the tossing tree
Snaps in the grasp of some strong agony,
And the dull plunge, and stifled cry betray
Where the grim water-fiend reclasps his prey!

Still shines the moon—still halts the panting storm,
It moves again—the shadow shapes to form,
Lo! where yon bank shelves gradual, and the ray
Silvers the reed, it cleaves its vigorous way!—
Saved from the deep, but happier far to save,
The foeman wrests the foeman from the grave!
Still shines the moon—still halts the storm!—above
His sons, looks down divine the Father-love!
Upon the Indian's breast droops Arden's head,
Its marble beauty rigid as the dead.
What skill so fondly tends the soul's eclipse,
Chafes the stiff limb, and breathes in breathless lips?
Wooes back the flickering life, and when, once more,
The ebbing blood the wan cheek mantles o'er;
When stirs the pulse, when opes the glazing eye,
What voice of joy finds listeners in the sky?
"Bless thee, my God—this mercy thine!—he lives:
Look in my heart, forgive—for it forgives!"

Then, while yet clear the heaven, he flies—he gains
The nearest roof—prompt aid his prayer obtains;
Well known the noble stranger's mien—they bear
To the rude home, and ply the zealous care;
Life with the dawn comes sure, if faint and slow,
And all night long the foeman watch'd the foe!

Day dawns on earth, still darkness wraps the mind;
Sleep pass'd, the waking is a veil more blind:
The soul, scared roughly from its mansion, glides
O'er mazy wastes through which the meteor guides.

The startled menial, who, alone of all
The hireling pomp that swarms in Arden's hall,
Attends his lord,—dismay'd lest one so high,
A rural Galen should permit to die,
Departs in haste to seek the subtler skill
Which from the College takes the right to kill;
And summon Lucy to the solemn room
To watch the father's life,—fast by the mother's tomb.
Meanwhile such facile arts as nature yields,
Draughts from the spring and simples from the fields,
Learn'd in his savage youth, the Indian plies;
The fever slakes, the cloudy darkness flies;
O'er the vex'd vision steals the lulling rest,
And Arden wakes to sense on Morvale's breast!

On Morvale's breast!—and through the noiseless door
A fearful footfall creeps, and lo! once more
Thou look'st, pale daughter, on thy father's foe!
Not with the lurid eye and menaced blow;
Not as when last, between the murtherous blade
And the proud victim, gleam'd the guardian maid—
Thy post is his!—that breast the prop supplies
That thine should yield;—as thine so watch those eyes,
Wistful and moist, that waning life above;
Recall the Heathen's hate!—behold the Christian's love!

The learned leach proclaims the danger o'er;
When life is safe, can Fate then harm no more?

'The danger past for Arden, but for you
Who watch the couch, what danger threats anew?
How meet in pious duty and fond care,
In hours when through the eye the heart is bare?
How join in those soft sympathies, and yet
The earlier link, the tenderer bond forget?
How can the soul the magnet-charm withstand,
When chance brings look to look, and hand to hand!
No, Indian, no—if yet the power divine
Above the laws of our low world be thine;
If yet the Honour which thy later creed
Softens, not quells, revere the injured dead,
Fly, ere the full heart cries, "I love thee still"—
And find thy guardian in the angel—WILL!
That power was his!

Along the landscape lay
The hazy rime of winter's dawning day:
Snake-like the curving mists betray'd the rill,
The last star gleam'd upon the Eastern hill,
Still slept beneath the leafless trees the herd;
Still mute the sharp note of the sunless bird;
No sound, no life; as to some hearth, bereft
By death, of welcome, since his wanderings left,
Comes back the traveller;—so to earth, forlorn
Returns the ungreeted melancholy Morn.

'Forth from the threshold stole the Indian!—far
Spread the dim land beneath the waning star.
Alas! how wide the world his heart will find
Who leaves one spot—the heart's true home, behind!
He paused—one upward look upon the gloom
Of the closed casement, the love-hallow'd room,
Where yet, perchance, while happier Suffering slept
Its mournful vigil tender Duty kept;

One prayer! What mercy taught us prayer?—as dews
On drooping herbs—as sleep tired life renews,
As dreams that lead, and lap our griefs in Heaven,
To Souls through Prayer, dew, sleep, and dream, are given!
So bow'd, not broken, and with manly will,
Onwards he strode, slow up the labouring hill!

If Lucy mourned his absence, not before
Her sire's dim eyes the face of grief she wore;
Haply her woman heart divined the spell
Of her own power, by flight proclaim'd too well;
And not in hours like these may self control
The generous empire of a noble soul:
Lo, her first thought, first duty—the soft reign
Of Woman—patience by the bed of pain!
As mute the father, yet to him made clear
The cause of flight untold to Lucy's ear;
Thus ran the lines that met, at morn, his eyes:—
"Farewell! my place a daughter now supplies!—
Thou hast pass'd the gates of Death, and bright once more
Smile round thy steps the sunlight and the shore.
Farewell; and if a soul, where hatred's gall
Melts into pardon that embalmeth all,
Can with forgiveness bless thee;—from remorse
Can pluck the stone which interrupts the course
Of thought to God;—and bid the waters rest
Calm in Heaven's smile,—poor fellow-man, be blest!
I, that can aid no more, now need an aid
Against myself; by mine own thoughts dismay'd:
I dare not face thy child—I may not dare
To commune with my heart—thy child is there!

I hear a voice that whispers hope, and start
In shame, to shun the tempter and depart.
How vile the pardon that I yield would seem,
If shaped and colour'd from the egoist's dream;
A barter'd compromise with thoughts that take
The path of conscience but for passion's sake—
If with the pardon I could say—'The Tomb
Devours the Past, so let the Moment bloom,
And see Calantha's brother reconciled,
Kneel to Calantha's lover, for his child!'
It may not be; sad sophists were our vain
Desires, if Right were not a code so plain;
In good or ill leave casuists on the shelf,
'He never errs who sacrifices self!'"

Great Natures, Arden, thy strange lot to know
And lose!—twin souls thy mistress and thy foe!
How flash'd they, high and starry, through the dull
World's reeking air—earnest and beautiful!
Erring perchance, and yet divinely blind,
Such hero errors purify our kind!
One noble fault that springs from SELF'S disdain
May oft more grace in Angel eyes obtain,
Than a whole life, without a seeming flaw,
Which served but Heaven, because of Earth in awe,
Which in each act has loss or profit weigh'd,
And kept with Virtue the accounts of Trade!
He too was born, lost Idler, to be great,
The sins that dwarf'd, he had a soul to hate.
Ambition, Ease, Example had beguiled,
And our base world in fawning had defiled;
Yet still, contrasting all he *did*, he *dream'd*;
And through the Worldling's life the Poet gleam'd.
His eye not blind to Virtue; to his ear
Still spoke the music of the banish'd sphere;

Still in his thought the Ideal, though obscured,
Shamed the rank meteor which his sense allured.
Wreck if he was, the ruin yet betray'd
The shatter'd fane for gods departed made;
And still, through weeds neglected and o'erthrown,
The blurr'd inscription show'd the altar-stone.
So scorn'd he not, as folly or as pride,
The lofty code which made the Indian's guide;
But from that hour a subtle change came o'er
The thoughts he veil'd, the outward mien he wore;
A mournful, weary gloom, a pall'd distaste
Of all the joys so warmly once embraced.
His eye no more *looks onward;* but its gaze
Rests where Remorse a life misspent surveys:
What costly treasures strew that waste behind;
What whirlwinds daunt the soul that sows the wind!
By the dark shape of what he *is*, serene
Stands the bright ghost of what he might have been:
Here the vast loss, and there the worthless gain—
Vice scorn'd, yet woo'd, and Virtue loved in vain!

'Tis said, the Nightingale, who hears the thrill
Of some rich lute, made vocal by sweet skill,
To match the music strains its wild essay,
Feels its inferior art, and envying, pines away:
So, waked at last, and scarcely now confest,
Pined the still Poet in the Worldling's breast!
So with the Harmony of Good, compared
Its lesser self—so languish'd and despair'd.

Awhile, from land to land he idly roved,
And join'd life's movement with a heart unmoved.
No more loud cities ring with Arden's name,
Applaud his faults, and call his fashion "Fame!"

Disgust with all things robes him as goes,
In that pale virtue, Vice, when weary, knows.
Yet his, at least, one rescue from the past;.
His, one sweet comfort—Lucy's love at last!
That bed of pain o'er which she had watch'd and wept—
That grave where Love forgot its wrongs and slept—
That touching sorrow and that still remorse
Unlock'd her heart, and gave the stream its course.
From her own grief, by griefs more dark beguiled,
Rose the consoling Angel in the Child!
Yet still the calm disease, whose mute decay
No leech arrests, crept gradual round its prey!
Death came, came gently, on his daughter's breast,
Murm'ring, "Remember where this dust should rest."
They bear the last Lord of that haughty race
Where winds the wave round Mary's dwelling-place;
And side by side (oh, be it in the sky
As in the earth!)—the long-divided lie!

Doth life's last act one wrong at least repair—
His nameless child to wealth at least the heir?
So Arden's will decreed—so sign'd the hand;
So ran the text—not so Law rules the land:
"I do bequeath unto my *child*," *—that word

* If a man wishes to leave a portion to his natural child, his lawyer will tell him to name the child, as if it were a stranger to his blood. If he says, "I leave to John Tompson, of Baker-street, 10,000*l.*," John Tompson may probably get the legacy; if he says, "I leave to my son, John Tompson, of Baker-street, 10,000*l.*," and the said John Tompson *is* his *son*, (*a natural one*,) it is a hundred to one if John Tompson ever touches a penny! Up springs the Inhuman Law, with its multiform obstacles, quibbles, and objections—proof of identity—evidence of birth!—Many and many a natural child has thus been robbed and swindled out of his sole claim upon redress—his sole chance of sub-istence. In most civilised countries a father is permitted to own the offspring, whom, unless he do so, he has wronged at its very birth—whom, if he do not so, he wrongs irremedially; with us the

Alone on strangers has the wealth conferr'd.
O'erjoy'd, Law's heirs the legal blunder read,
And Justice cancels Nature from the deed.
O moral-world! deal sternly if thou wilt
With the warm weakness as the wily guilt,
But spare the harmless! Wherefore shall the child
Be from the pale which shelters Crime exiled?
Why heap such barriers round the sole redress
Which sin can give to sinless wretchedness?
Why must the veriest stranger thrust aside
Our flesh—our blood, because a name's denied?
Give all thou hast to whomsoe'er thou please,
Foe, alien, knave, as whim so Law decrees;
But if thy heart speaks, if thy conscience cries—
"I give my child"—the Law thy voice belies;
Chicanery balks all effort that atones,
And Justice robs the wretch that Nature owns!

So abject, so despoil'd, so penniless,
Stood thy love-born in the world's wilderness,
O Lord of lands and towers, and princely sway!
O Dust, from whom with breath has pass'd away
The humblest privilege the beggar finds
In rags that wrap his infant from the winds!

In the poor hamlet where her grandsire died,
Where sleeps her mother by the magnate's side,
The orphan found a home. Her story known,
Men's hearts allow the right, men's laws disown.
Though lost the birthright, and denied the name,
Her pastor-grandsire's virtues shield from shame;

error is denied reparation, and the innocence is sentenced to outlawry. Our Laws, with relation to illegitimate children, are more than unjust—they are inhuman.

Pity seeks kind pretext to pour its balms,
And yields light toils that saves the pride from alms.
A soft respect the orphan's steps attends,
And the sharp thorn at least the rose defends.
So flows o'ershadow'd, but not darksome by,
Her life's lone stream—the banks admit the sky
Day's quiet taskwork o'er, when Ev'ning grey
Lists the last carol on the quivering spray,
When lengthening shades reflect the distant hill,
And the near spire, upon the lullëd rill;
Her sole delight with pensive step to glide
Along the path that winds the wave beside,
A moment pausing on the bridge, to mark
Perchance the moonlight vista through the dark:
Or watch the eddy where the wavelets play
Round the chafed stone that checks their happy way,
Then onward stealing, vanish from the view,
Where the star shimmers on the solemn yew,
As shade from earth and starlight from the sky
Meet—and repose on Death's calm mystery.

Moons pass'd—Behold the blossom on the spray!
Hark to the linnet!—On the world is May!
Green earth below and azure skies above;
May calling life to joy, and youth to love;
While Age, charm'd back to rosy hours awhile,
Hears the lost vow, and sees the vanish'd smile.
And does not May, lone Child, revive in thee,
Blossom and bud and mystic melody;
Does not the heart, like earth, imbibe the ray?
Does not the year's recall thy life's sweet May?
When like an altar to some happy bride,
Shone all creation by the loved one's side?

Yes, Exile, yes—*that* Empire is thine own,
Rove where thou wilt, awaits thee still thy throne!
Lo, where the paling cheek, the unconscious sigh,
The slower footstep, and the heavier eye,
Betray the burthen of sweet thoughts and mute,
The slight tree bows beneath the golden fruit!

'Tis eve. The orphan gains the holy ground,
And listening halts;—the boughs that circle round
Vex'd by no wind, yet rustle with a sound,
As if that gentle form had scared some lone
Unwonted step more timid than its own!
All still once more; perchance some daunted bird,
That loves the night, the murmuring leaves had stirr'd?
She nears the tomb—amaze!—what hand unknown
Has placed those pious flowers upon the stone?
Why beats her heart? why hath the electric mind,
Whose act, whose hand, whose presence there, divined?
Why dreading, yearning, turn those eyes to meet
The adored, the lost?—Behold him at her feet!
His, those dark eyes that seek her own through tears,
His hand that clasps, and his the voice she hears,
Broken and faltering—"Is the trial past?
Here, by the dead, art thou made mine at last?
Far—in far lands I heard thy tale!—And thou
Orphan and lone!—no bar between us now!
No Arden now calls up the wrong'd and lost;
Lo, in this grave appeased the upbraiding ghost!
Orphan, I am thy father now!—Bereft
Of all beside,—this heart at least is left.
Forgive, forgive—Oh, canst thou yet bestow
One thought on him, to whom thou art all below?
Who could desert but to remember more?
Canst thou the Heaven, the exile lost, restore?
Canst thou——"

The orphan bow'd her angel head;
Breath blent with breath—her soul her silence said;
Eye unto eye, and heart to heart reveal'd;—
And lip on lip the eternal nuptials seal'd!

The Moon breaks forth—one silver stream of light
Glides from its fount in heaven along the night—
Flows in still splendour through the funeral gloom
Of yews,—and widens as it clasps the tomb—
Through the calm glory hosts as calm above
Look on the grave—and by the grave is LOVE!

ST. STEPHEN'S.

TO

LORD LYNDHURST

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

AN ATTEMPT

NOT ONLY TO ILLUSTRATE VARIETIES IN THAT ART

OF WHICH HE IS THE SERENEST AND MOST ACCOMPLISHED MASTER,

BUT ALSO TO RENDER TO THE DEAD

SOMETHING OF THAT DISPASSIONATE JUSTICE WHICH

INVESTS WITH JUDICIAL AUTHORITY HIS OWN

ELOQUENT OPINIONS ON THE EVENTS

THAT AGITATE THE LIVING.

March 1860.

ST. STEPHEN'S.

PART FIRST.

When frank-eyed War with Love stood hand in hand,
And cities oped on lonely Faeryland,
Song was the voice most faithful to the time,
And England spoke in Chaucer's lusty rhyme.
Thus long ere yet the Orator is known,
Each age demands an utterance all its own;
Now thrills in carols wise without a rule,
Now fires a camp, and now dictates a school.

But not till warring thoughts mature their strife,
Till some slow people swell to stormy life,
And, lost the inert hereditary awe,
Exact a reason where imposed a law,—
Not till the right to argue truth be won,
The heart of many fires the lips of one;
Then the great Art which sways this age of ours,
Stands forth as Justice 'midst conflicting powers,
And, lest the foe of all, Brute Force, prevail,
Leans on the sword, while proffering but the scale.

What causes first in English halls combined
To free the voice?—those which first freed the mind.
In Eastern tales, a fond enchanter's care
Immures in rock a giant child of air;

By its own growth the genius wears away
The yielding stone, and nears its native day;
Till through pale fissures rushes in the storm,
And from the granite whirlwinds lift the form;—
So forth soar'd Reason from the cells of Rome,
Rapt on the blasts that rent her prison-home;
And her own pinions, in their angry flight
Cast shadow down while sailing up to light.
Then man, tormented with a glorious grief,
Scared by the space that spreads round unbelief,
Sought still to reconcile the earth and sky,
And to his trouble came Philosophy.
She came, as came from Jove a Prophet-Dream,
Mid Night's last shade and Morning's earliest beam,
And in weird parables of coming things
Show'd truth to seers, but boded woe to kings.

Forms that hem round this social state of Man
Are so by custom blended into plan,
That thro' one chink if some bold footstep steals,
Each fence is loosed, and all the structure reels.
Hark, BACON speaks! and walls, with which the wise
Had belted Nature, vanish; startled eyes
Explore a bound, and skies expand on skies.
Faith thus dislodged from ancient schools and creeds,
Question to question, doubt to doubt succeeds—
Clouds gathering flame for thunders soon to be,
And glass'd on SHAKESPEARE as upon a sea.
Each guess of others into worlds unknown
Shakespeare revolves, but guards conceal'd his own—
As in the Infinite hangs poised his thought,
Surveying all things, and asserting nought.

And now, transferr'd from singer and from sage,
Stands in full day the Spirit of the Age—

INQUIRY!—She, so coy when first pursued
In her own ancient arduous solitude,
Seized by the crowd, and dragg'd before their bar,
Changes her shape, and towers transform'd to War;
Inscribes a banner, flings it to the gales—
Cries, "I am Truth, and Truth, when arm'd, prevails."
Up leaps the zealot—Zeal must clear her way,
And fell the forests that obscure the day.
To guard the Bible flashes forth the sword,
And Cromwell rides, the servant of the Lord.
Twin-born with Freedom, then with her took breath
That Art whose dying will be Freedom's death.
From Thought's fierce clash, in lightning broke the word;
Ungagg'd at last the Isle's strong Man was heard:
Still in their sheaths the direful swords repose;
Voice may yet warn: The ORATOR arose!

Founders of England's slow-built eloquence—
Truth's last adornment as her first defence—
Pass—but as shadows! Nevermore again
May the land need, yet reel beneath, such men!
Lo, where from haunted floors the phantoms rise,
Pale through the mists which cleared for us the skies,
There, but one moment lingering in the hall,
The earliest, hardiest Orator of all,
Young ELIOT wanes upon the verge of War,
As day, in redd'ning, slays its own bright star.
There flits by WALLER of the silvery tongue,
And faith as ductile as the lyre he strung.
There, wise to warn, yet impotent to guide,
And sad with foresight, moves the solemn HYDE.
Mark in the front, fit leader of the van,
Yon large, imperfect, necessary Man;
With all the zeal a cause conflicting needs,
And all the craft by which the cause succeeds;

Iron as Ludlow, yet as Villiers trim,
'Twixt saint and sinner—Atlas-shoulder'd PYM.

Behind, pure, chill, and lonely as a star,
Ruthless as angels, when destroying, are,
Sits VANE, and dreams Utopian isles to be,
While swells the storm, and sea but spreads on sea;
Still in a mirage he discerns a shore,
And acts with Hampden from belief in More.

Nor less alone, nor less a dreamer, there
Wan FALKLAND looks through space with gloomy stare,
Pondering that question which no wise man's voice
Ever solved yet to guide the brave man's choice,
When the dread Present, as on an abyss,
Splits, in two paths, the frowning precipice—
That, to lost towers which tides already whelm;
This, through dark gorges to an unknown realm;
Hard to decide! each future has its crime;
Each past its wreck: here, how control the time?
There how rekindle dust? Between the two,
At least choose quick. *Life* is the verb "To do!"
What makes the huge wall crash before the course
Of the slight ball? Accelerated force!

Ponderest thou still, while murder fills the stage,
And the ghost becks, O Hamlet of thine age?
"The scholar's, soldier's glass!"—glass clearer still,
Of worth made useless by the want of will.

But lo! what shadow fills the phantom hall,
Awful and large, awhile obscuring all;
On angry aspects bending brows of woe,
Still as a glacier over storms below?

That front, proud STRAFFORD, needs no bauble crown
To make it kinglier than the Stuart's frown.
How the dire genius, skill'd, alert, intent,
Speaks from each swart Italian lineament!
Some close Visconti there your search defies,
In the cold gloom of unrevealing eyes;
And the hard daring of Castrucci dwells
In scheming lips compress as Machiavel's.

But hark! what voice, deep-toned, and musical
With Raleigh's noble English, thrills the hall?
Still of that voice which awed its age, one tone
Comes, sad as flutes funereal, to our own;
When, at the last, the grand offender pleads,
Tears drown our justice and efface his deeds;
And when poor Stuart, with his feeble "Nay,"
Signs the great life which shields his own away,
Freedom, that needs the victim, rights his shade,
And turns her axe towards him who has betray'd;
While loyal Knighthood, half a rebel grown,
Veils its shamed eyes from Treason on a throne.

But see, where rising last on lull'd debate,
With brief discourse, in which each word has weight,
With "brain to plan, tongue to persuade, and hand
To do all mischief,"—which can free his land,
Great HAMPDEN fills the eye!
Oh, wise as Strafford, and as Vane sincere,
Warm without frenzy, wary without fear,
Freedom's calm champion, while in peace her trust,
Freedom's first martyr while her war was just;
Hadst thou but lived thine own designs to crown!—
No! at its brightest let thy sun go down!
If Heaven in thee had view'd the later guide,
From Heaven's elected death had turn'd aside.

Thrice happy one! thy white name is not seen
In the red list of Bradshaw's jurymen;
Thy manhood smote not the grey crownless head—
Thy faith forsook not the Good Cause it led—
Thy cheek flush'd not at the usurper's scoff,
When pikemen bore a people's bauble off;
Hid from thy sight the loved Republic's doom,
In courtiers crowding Cromwell's ante-room,
And Gideon-Saints, the men of Marston Moor,
Drill'd into sentries at the Brewer's door.
So pass, O pure Ideal of the free,
True star to steer by, wheresoe'er the sea,
Linking the cause that gives the world its breath—
With Cromwell's triumph? No; with Hampden's death.

Slow out of sight the conclave fades away,
And the last shape which doth the gaze delay,
Resting on orb and mace the large right hand,
Is yon rude sloven with the blood-stain'd band.

Wide is the void they leave as they depart;
Long Freedom sleeps,—with Freedom sleeps her art.
The grand Republic—for the million won—
Shrinks into space just large eno' for one!
Safe from wild talk, reign, lonely Cromwell, reign!
Hath not the Lord deliver'd thee from Vane?
What! would a Sanhedrim of Vanes appal
Less than one stranger shadow on thy wall?
Why gag the Time?—To guard with Mutes thy life?
Safer the loud tongue than the noiseless knife:—
To still the flood that floated The Good Cause?
Or save from critics Cromwell's fame and laws?—
Vain dupe,—the stream thy genius might have led,
Stopt by thy fear, runs back to its old bed—

And The Good Cause?—is Charles on his white horse!
And Cromwell?—lo! at Tyburn hangs a corse!
Yes, silenced long, outbreaks the Nation's voice—
"King Charles—King Charles—let all the land rejoice!"
Sick of grim saints, short commons, and long graces,
Welcome wild sinners, laughter, and gay faces.
France saves our monarch from that vulgar curse,
A mean dependence on his people's purse—
Charles from King Louis takes his annual fees,
Snubs rude St. Stephen, and misrules at ease.
Shut up the House—can Freedom need its votes
To doom a Sidney?—or to saint an Oates?
But from the flats of that ignoble hour,
What genius lifts its lightning-shatter'd tower?
Wild as the shapes invoked by magic spell,
Dire and grotesque, behold Achitophel!
Dark convict, sear'd by History's branding curse,
And hung in chains from Dryden's lofty verse.
Yet who has pierced the labyrinth of that brain?—
Who plomb'd that genius, both so vast and vain?—
What moved its depths?—Ambition?—Passion?—Whim?
This day a Strafford—and the next a Pym?
Is it, in truth, as Dryden hath implied,
Was his "great wit to madness near allied?"
Accept that guess, and it explains the Man;
Reject—and solve the riddle if ye can!

But, "halting there in a wide sea of wax,"
Trusting no star, trims boasting HALIFAX;
And who so fit that fickle age to lead—
An age of doubt, a man without a creed?

Complete as Gorgias in the sophist's art—
Orator not—for orators need heart.
Note him, "of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
Endow'd by Nature, and by Learning taught
To move assemblies;"—yes, to reconcile
Patriots to place! That "wit" had won no smile
From Marvell's lip; that "pregnant thought" supplied
No light to Hampden; nor dispell'd in Hyde
One noble doubt,—in Vane one noble dream!
When what they are not men desire to seem,
Their praises follow him who can suggest
Smooth public pleas for private interest,
Dwarf down rude virtues with a cynic sneer,
Yet simulate their substance in veneer,
Unite extremes in this sole golden mean,—
"'Tis good for both *my* good should come between;
And who with zeal sincere can raise the cry,
'My country thrives'—unless he add, 'and I'?"

Out on the mask!—we turn a man to find,
The naked face—the honest human mind—
And hail fair SOMERS! If some names more near
Our work-day world shine more distinctly clear,
Yet who shall tell, in glory's luminous host,
Which are the orbs that influence earth the most?
And every life of use so purely bright,
Beams evermore a part of the world's light;
The air we breathe its noiseless rays suffuse,
Blent in the rainbow, nourishing the dews.

What voice now swells from Anne's Augustan days?
What form of beauty glows upon the gaze?
Bright as the Greek to whom all toil was ease,
Flash'd forth the English Alcibiades.

He for whom Swift had not one cynic sneer,
Whom hardiest Walpole honour'd with his fear,
Whose lost harangues a Pitt could more deplore
Than all the gaps in Greek and Roman lore,
Appalling, charming, haunting St. John shone,
And stirr'd that age as Byron thrill'd our own;
Sighing for ease, yet ever keen for strife,
Zeno's his creed, yet Aretin's his life;
With Protean grace through every change he sports,
Now awing senates, now perplexing courts;
A soul of flame, though both a brand and torch,
Firing the camp or dazzling from the porch.
Behold him now, not in his autumn day,
But the full flowering of his dainty May;
Not Pope's sad friend, and soul-deceiving guide,
But the State's darling and the Church's pride.
How the fair aspect, ere a sound is heard,
Prepares the path for the melodious word;
Mark in each gesture force with ease allied,
And manly passion with patrician pride;
And oh, that style! so stately, sweet, and strong,
Which, tamely read, has all the charm of song,
What must its power o'er beating hearts have been,
The genius speaking while the man was seen!
Judge it by this—behold a later time,
His party shatter'd, and its cause a crime;
His white name blotted, his young vigour spent,
A lone grey man comes back from banishment.
Fear seized the Council; England seem'd too weak
Against that tongue, if once allow'd to speak;
Law ransacks all the expedients at its choice,
Restores the peer, and then proscribes his voice.
So the grand orator, his field denied,
Shrunk to a small philosopher, and died.

Dear to all classic taste that age of Anne;
We love its poets, though their verse will scan;
Its prose still greets us like a pleasant friend,
Though not so wise but what we comprehend—
A well-drest elegant Horatian age.
Suspend the curtain, glance along the stage;
Who's that with timorous yet with pompous air,
Blandly reserved, and stiffly debonnair?
HARLEY, "got up" for splendour and parade;
And ne'er less Harley than when in brocade.

Note through the levée with a careless stride,
Parting the throng as some tough keel the tide,
With soldier bearing, yet in priestly guise,
With black brows knitted over azure eyes,
With lips that kindle from the gravest there,
The boisterous laughter which they scorn to share,
The stern, sad man who made the world so gay,
SWIFT comes—half-Rousseau and half-Rabelais.
Half-Rousseau?—yes; for while we gaze on both,
Hating we pity, and admiring loathe;
With varying fever-fits now glow, now freeze,
And shuddering ask, "Which genius, which disease?"
Half-Rabelais?—yes; on crozier and on crown
Hanging wild fool-bells, jingling reverence down;
Profaning, levelling, yet illuming earth,
Vile and sublime, the demagogue of mirth:
Power, wisdom, beauty trampled, smear'd, and spurn'd:
What rests to admire?—the strength that overturn'd!
Genius permits no mortal to debase
By his own height the stature of his race;
The crowds beneath if he with scorn surveys,
He dwarfs them not; he does but lift their gaze.

But Swift, not now the envenom'd malcontent;
His mind has space—its gloomy fires a vent;
The smile, if wintry, yet plays round the sneer;
The bright stern eye sees some cathedral near;
And the fierce hand that warms in Harley's clasp,
Feels at the touch a mitre in its grasp.
Break up the levée! *that* no place for friends,
Harley's gilt coach the equal pair attends—
Poet and premier take the air together,
Discussing Church and gossip, State and weather.
See, as they pass, what quaint familiar groups,
What lively Muses in what formal hoops!
See Pope's light Sappho, arm'd with pen and fan,
This points her billetdoux, that slays her man;
While her pale poet scorn'd yet courted sighs,
And one brief folly dims those lustrous eyes.
Lo, Marlborough's duchess! welcome to her grace—
Her with the fury heart and fairy face;
Whose aim a despot's, and whose sense a doll's—
Whose pride Roxana's, and whose language Poll's.

With English humour and wild Irish heart,
See STEELE rehearse what Goldsmith made a part,
Ranging at whim from fever-heat to zero,
Now the frank rake, and now "the Christian Hero."
Play as he will, the deuce is in the cards;
Student at Isis, trooper in the Guards—
A brisk comedian now before the lamps,
And now—a grave Commissioner of Stamps;
Now a church union with the Scotch his wish,
Next day, "a project for preserving fish;"
Inventing Tatlers, scribbling a Gazette—
Ever at work, and never out of debt.

Ah! wits, like fools, oft make their proper rods—
Where Prudence comes not, never come the gods.

But there, with step more modest and more slow,
Comes the supreme "SPECTATOR" of the show;
Exquisite Genius, to whose chisell'd line
The ivory's polish lends the ivory's shine.
With strength so sweet, in its subdued repose,
Virgil of humorists, and Pope of prose;
In this what dignity, in that what ease!
In both what charm!—the rarest charm, to please!

Quick glide the rest. See CIBBER has his lord;
Were there more Cibbers, lords would be less bored!
See BERKELEY, lingering on his heavenward way,
Smooth his large front to the child-laugh of GAY;
See peers, see princes vying for the praise
Of high-bred CONGREVE, heartless as his plays.
But wheresoe'er the eye delighted rove,
The Muse still stands beside some earthly Jove,
Fused in one air the universal powers
That light the ages, or but gild the hours.
Rank then was pleased when Wit its birthright claim'd;
If either cringed—not Swift, be Harley blamed.
In court, in senate, hall, and mart, and street,
Frank Genius came its fellow-chiefs to meet—
Pleasure itself seem'd dull and void of ease,
Till some bright spirit taught her how to please;
And no Sir Plume was half so proud as when
The sylph politely shaped him to a pen.

But all too long a truant from my theme,
I mark the sparkles, not pursue the stream.
Now comes the Man who has for verse no ear,
For lore no reverence, and for wit no fear;

Burly and bluff, in St. John's vacant place,
The land's new leader lifts his jovial face
Alas! poor Nine—a dreary time for you!
King George the First, Sir ROBERT WALPOLE too!
Sir Robert waits;—those shrewd coarse features scan,
How strong the sense, how English is the man!—
English, if left to all plain sense bestows,
And stripp'd of all that Man to genius owes.
He sets no flowers, but each dry stubble gleans—
Statesman in ends, but huxter in the means—
Boldly he nears his hacks, extends the chaff,
And flings the halter with an ostler's laugh.
Corruptly frank, he buys or bullies all,
And is what placemen style "the practical."
Is this man eloquent? The man creates
New ground, now ours—the level of debates.
Eloquent?—Yes, in parliamentary sense,
The skilful scorn of what seems eloquence;
Adroit, familiar, fluent, easy, free,
And each quick point as quick to seize as see;
Shielding the friend, but covering from the foe,
And ne'er above his audience nor below:
Arm'd in finance, blow up with facts the speech,
And rows of figures bristle in the breach.
Soft in his tones, seductive in his sighs,
When doom'd to take "a vote upon supplies;"
At times a proser, at no time a prater,
And six feet high—in short, a great debater.
And is that all?—Nay, truth must grant much more;
The bluff old Whig was Briton to the core.
With this strong purpose, whatsoe'er he plann'd,
To save from Pope and Papist kings the land.
His heart was mild; it slew not, nor proscribed;
His tenets loose; in clemency he bribed.

A town conspires in secret:—he sends down
Cannon—tut! candidates to buy the town.
Sly Jesuits have a senator misled,
He hints a pension, and he saves a head.
While since adventure outlets must obtain,
In closing war he frees the roads to gain;
Shows teeming marts, and says to Hope, "Behold,
'Tis Peace that guards the avenues to gold."
So blent with good and evil all the springs
Which move in states the wheels of human things,
That, though the truth must be with pain confest,
Men not too good may suit mankind the best:
So leave Sir Robert "button'd to the chin,
Broadcloth without; and a warm heart within,"
To tax, to bribe, to coax the public weal
From foreign standards and fraternal steel.

Far livelier wit, which malice more refines,
Words better minted, and from wealthier mines,
More warmth with dignity, more force with grace,
Rank PULTENEY loftier—loftier, till in place.
His art attack, success his genius ends;
Yield him the fort—he's lost when he defends.
Yet none so boldly rush'd upon the wall,
And none so stoutly sapp'd it to its fall;
And none e'er wielded with so keen a fence
The poniard sarcasm lends to eloquence.
See him with Walpole singly hand to hand,
How the slight dagger foils the heavy brand;
Sharpening to epigram each word of hate,
He shines and stabs, the Martial of debate.*

* "How many Martials were in Pulteney lost!"—POPE.

With wit as piercing, but in words more chaste,
That steal their blow, and never wound the taste,
His Thyrsus sword in classic wreaths conceal'd,
Charms and persuades Hortensian CHESTERFIELD.
Too slight to jostle with the Burghers' crowd,
With tones too well bred when the roar is loud,
Form'd for the air patrician calm affords,
He rivals Cicero when he speaks to Lords;
Makes commerce courtier-like, and Cocker clear,
And speaks of freedom like a free-born—peer.

High above each in genius, lore, and fire
With mind of muscles which no toil could tire,
With lips that seem'd like Homer's gods to quaff
From nectar-urns the unextinguish'd laugh,
Frank with the mirth of souls divinely strong,
CARTERET'S large presence floats from out the throng.
What earlier school this grand comedian rear'd?
His first essays no crowds less courtly cheer'd.
From learned closets came a sauntering sage,
Yawn'd, smiled, and spoke, and took by storm the age:
Who that can hear him, and on business, speak,
Would dream he lunch'd with BENTLEY upon Greek,
And will to-night with Hutcheson regale on
The feast of Reason in the tough To Kalon.
With what rich spoils the full life overflows;
His genius gilds, because his nature glows;
Call it not versatile, but, like the sun,
Fix'd and the same whate'er it beams upon;
Fix'd and the same not less because it calls
Colour from things on which, as light, it falls.

Pass by the lesser, not inglorious host;
Awed, they shrink back; arise, majestic ghost!

Lo, the great Arts' unrivall'd master one,
The mightier Father of the mighty Son
Like hero myths before the Homeric time,
Looms the vast form—if vague, the more sublime;
That pomp of speech but such memorial leaves,
As the gone storm with which the wave still heaves;
Or as, on hills remote, the cloudy wreath,
Flush'd with the giant sun that sank beneath.
Yet it is not by words that critics praise,
Nor yet by deeds which after-judgment weighs
With ounce and scruple in impartial scales,
That a great soul, like a great truth, prevails.
Apart from what is said and what is done,
There is a force by which the world is won,
Born in men's destined ruler!—Reason halts
To gauge the merits or assess the faults,
While forth unguess'd magnetic influence flows,
Attracts the followers, or unnerves the foes.

Our fathers tell us what their fathers told,
How from those lips the glorious cataract roll'd;
And while its scorn all barrier swept away,
Each wave the roughest still flash'd back the day.
The effect sublime; the cause why fritter down?
Did stage-craft teach the mode to wear the crown?
Learn'd he from Roscius in what folds to bring
The imperial purple?—was he less the king?
"Actor," you call him; yes, with inborn ease
What labour made divine Demosthenes;
Tones with the might of music at their choice,
The front august, the eye itself a voice,
These Nature gave; did care the rest impart,
Nature herself were chaos without art.

Was it a fault, if cowering Senates shook,
Thrill'd by a whisper, spellbound by a look?
Or could the gesture dazzle and control,
Save as it launch'd some lightning of the soul?
Others take force from judgment, fancy, thought,
CHATHAM from passion; for its voice he sought,
Sounds rolling large as waves of stormy song,
By pride made stately, but by anger strong;
To colder lips he left the words that teach;
He awed and crush'd—the Æschylus of speech.

Hush! let that form the long perspective close,—
In marble calm the Olympian kings repose;
Place on his throne the thunder-lord of all,
To end the vista and complete the hall;
And as ye turn with reverent steps to tread
Galleries that niche the less majestic dead,
Retain that noble image in the heart,
And, your own selves made nobler, so depart.
Thus when the Greek, enshrined in Elis, saw
The Zeus that Phidias shaped for human awe,
The Power but bent above him from its throne
A front that lifted to the stars his own;
Back from the shrine to active life he brought
The sacred influence in the statelier thought,
More nerved to high design and dauntless deed,
To front the Agora or repel the Mede.

PART SECOND.

ERE France the last dread century closed in blood,
Gay were the portents that foretold the flood;
Light storm-birds gladden'd in the fatal breeze,
And sportive meteors toy'd with deathful seas.
As each new surge o'er some old landmark broke,
Wit smiled, and took the deluge as a joke.*
Vices were virtues from restraint released,
Proofs of the man's redemption from the priest;
Schools and saloons arranged one charming creed,
For ethics, *Faublas*, and for faith, *Candide*.

* It is not here intended to describe the impression made upon profound thinkers, or upon pure and earnest philanthropists, by the warning signs that preceded the great French Revolution; the lines in the text refer to the joyous levity with which those on the surface of society regarded the prognostics of the coming earthquake. The gay temper in which airy wits and young nobles introduced the grim spirit of the age as a pleasant fashion of the drawing-room, is well hit off by Count de Ségur in his *Mémoires ou Souvenirs*:—

"Pour nous, jeune noblesse Française, sans regret pour le passé, sans inquiétude pour l'avenir, nous marchions gaiement sur un tapis de fleurs qui nous cachait un abîme. Rians frondeurs des modes anciennes, de l'orgueil féodal de nos pères, et de leurs graves etiquettes, tout ce qui était antique nous paraissait gênant et ridicule. La gravité des anciennes doctrines nous pesait, la philosophie riante de Voltaire nous entrainait en nous amusant. . . . . La liberté, quelque fût son langage, nous plaisait par son courage; l'égalité par sa commodité! On trouve du plaisir à descendre tant qu'on croit pouvoir remonter dès qu'on le veut: et sans prévoyance nous goûtions tout à la fois les avantages du patriciat, et les douceurs d'une philosophie plebéienne. . . . . On applaudissait à la cour les maximes républicaines de Brutus; enfin on parlait d'indépendance dans les camps, de democratie chez les nobles, de philosophie dans lès bals, de morale dans les boudoirs."—*Mémoires ou Souvenirs de* M. LE COMTE DE SÉGUR, *de l'Académie Française, pair de France*, vol. i. pp. 26, 42, 152.

As servants who patrician place resign,
If his mean lordship miss a score of wine,
Or if my lady blame the zeal that fills
With joints unstinted gaps in weekly bills,
To serve some rake who scorns to overlook
A scullion's morals or a steward's book;
So men, restrain'd the Christian code within
From the fair perquisites of pleasant sin,
Look'd for a master much too grand for all
Such paltry spyings in the servants' hall,—
Found out a thorough gentleman of Rome,
And felt with BRUTUS perfectly at home.
Slight work, though noisy, to parade him out,
Crowd at his heels, and cheer him with a shout;
"Freedom and Brutus—Freedom for your lives!"—
That done, they took their supper, and your wives!

France sets the fashion to all States polite;
England grew frisky in her own despite;
Hampdens and Lovelaces got drunk together,
And the red cap display'd the Prince's feather.
Gay time and strange, when George the Fourth was young,
By Gilray painted, and by Hanbury sung;
When peers, six-bottled, talk'd as Marat wrote,
And Devon's kiss seduced a blacksmith's vote,—
Paine and Petronius equally in vogue,
Don Juan in the *rôle* of demagogue.
At home thus rear'd, in foreign parts improved,
A strong young genius gambled, drank, and loved
From each rank marsh increased its native glow,
Till Fox blazed forth as England's Mirabeau.
Concede the likeness, qualified, 'tis true,
As different climes diversify the hue;

Each had these merits,—massive breadth of sense,
The popular might of headlong vehemence;
The brawn and muscle both of frame and mind,
Which shoulder down the mob of humankind:
More had the Frank to dazzle and amaze,
More grand the image, more superb the phrase,
Thoughts more condensed in diction so complete,
They pass as proverbs nations still repeat.
Read what remains of Fox,—where find through all
One perfect sentence after-times recall?
Tush!—weigh no sentence! what pervades the *whole?*
Circumfluent radiance from one central soul.
Light in the Frank each prismal tint defines,
Against the cloud the gorgeous rainbow shines;
Light in the Englishman like sunshine flows,
Nor limns to sight the hues it still bestows.
Grant that mere intellect enthrals you more
In the vast Frank; we grant it, and abhor.
Body and soul alike what stains pollute!
In brain, the god—in what remains, the brute.
The Titan type of all that curst his time,
The French Enceladon of force and crime;
But in the Briton, if large faults you scan,
Larger than all the glorious heart of man.
His that warm genius which preserves the child—
No vizar'd falsehood in his friendship smiled—
No malice darken'd in his candid frown—
His worst offences those of half the town;
While his free virtues are so genial made,
That love, not envy, follows as their shade;
Softens each merit to familiar view,
"And like the shadow proves the substance true."

Men live who tell us what no books can teach,
How spoke the speaker—what his style of speech.
Our Fox's voice roll'd no melodious stream—
It rose in splutter, and went off in scream.
Yet could it vary in appropriate place,
From the sharp alto to the rumbling bass.
Such sudden changes when you'd least expect,
Secured to dissonance a stage effect,
Striking you most when into talk-like ease
Slid the wild gamut down the cracking keys.
The action? what Quintilian would have shock'd;
The huge fist thunder'd, and the huge frame rock'd,
As clattering down, *immensis ore*, went
Splinters and crags of crashing argument.
Not for neat reasonings, subtle and refined,
Paused the strong logic of that rushing mind;
It tore from out the popular side of Truth
Fragments the larger because left uncouth—
Hands, if less strong, more patient than his own,
Perfect the statue, his heaved forth the stone,
And in the rock his daring chisel broke,
Hew'd the bold outlines with a hasty stroke.
But on this force, with its disdain of rule,
No safe good sense would like to found a school;
And (drop the image) he who leads mankind,
Must seek to soothe and not to shock the mind.
The chief whose anger all the angry cheer,
Thins his own ranks—the temperate disappear;
They shake their heads, and in a sober fright
Groan, "What a passion he was in to-night!
Men in a passion must be in the wrong;
And, heavens! how dangerous when they're made so
strong!"

Thus is it strange, with all his genius, zeal,
Such head to argue, and such heart to feel,
That the great Whig, amidst immense applause,
Scared off his clients, and bawl'd down his cause,—
Undid Reform, by lauding revolution,
Till cobblers cried, "God save the Constitution!"
Met by deserters in his own approaches,
He fled; his followers fill'd three hackney-coaches!

Leave we the orator, but track the Man.
May clothes with bloom the orchard at St. Anne;
Under the blossoms, stirr'd by the meek wind,
See that large form so quietly reclined;
Those black brows bent o'er Learning's calmest tome,
That smile whose peace floods, as with sunlight, home!
There see him taste, far from life's reek and din,
Toil without strife, and pleasure without sin;
Glow o'er some golden song, or pause perplext
By some dry scholiast or some doubtful text;
Charm kindred ears with Attic lore and wit,
And rapt to Pindus, leave mankind to Pitt.

Beautiful picture, sweet with moral truth,
Thus how in age does genius win back youth!
To boyhood's happy tasks revert its eyes,
And con the book that made its earliest prize;
While, howsoe'er august its fame achieved,
That charms us least which most itself deceived;
The fiery contests, the triumphant goals,
The unfamiliar tests of troubled souls.
What charms us most in great men is to see
Their greatness doff'd, the men as we may be—
Fox in the Senate—toil beyond our scope!
Fox at St. Anne's—such leisure all may hope!

From desk, from till, the week-day wear of mind,
Each may relax his weary limbs, reclined
Wherever blooms the bough or plays the wind,
Blest as the great reprieved from public gaze,
In grassy nooks remote, on Sabbath-days.*

All that contrasted, foil'd, and undermined
His rival chief, the younger PITT combined.
Proud self-esteem, decorous and austere,
Strict self-control, not Zeno's more severe;
Like some old Chaldee, from his Pharos high,
O'er human errors scarcely stoop'd his eye;
Still on that eye shone unobserved no star,
And still that Pharos guided fleets afar.
From earliest youth, as one ordain'd to lead
The solemn priesthood of an elder creed,
Instructed duly, kept from all apart,
No schoolboy glee relax'd his lonely heart;
No ribald playground mock'd his serious air,
Could limbs so sacred learn to "hunt the hare?"
Could hands reserved to minister the law,
Speed the light ball, or knuckle down to taw?
From birth to death, through pomp, ambition, strife,
Serenely strenuous pass'd that stately life
Why marvel that the beardless hierarch sprung
At once to power?—the hierarch ne'er was young.
And ne'er was old, but, dying in his prime,
Stands forth completed while vouchsafed to time.
With those he led Pitt is not to be class'd;
His was no blind subservience to the Past.
Not Fox himself loved English freedom more:
True to her hearth, if careful of her door.

* —— "In remoto gramine per dies
Festos——" HORAT., lib. ii. Carm. 111.

Who at the *rouge-et-noir* of Clootz and Paine
Would risk the loss, or much desire the gain?
Freedom, that sovereign capital of Man,
In thrifty savings with our sires began;
When times are clear and credit safe, look out,
Seek sound investments; for increase?—no doubt.
But dread the man, his own last farthing spent,
Who cries, "Lend all; I promise cent per cent."

Unto the Ruler, as to Jove of old,
Necessity is *Time;* his hands may hold
The thunder or the balance, still the power
That masters even the Immortal is the Hour.
Men praise or blame in Pitt the iron will.
Well, steel, though supple, is of iron still.
Thus will in Pitt could bend to ward the stroke;
It was by bending that it never broke.
The time explains each dazzling contradiction;
His wish reform, his policy restriction;
His game for Peace so wary to the last;
His warlike vigour when the die was cast.
As veers the wind, so shifts the pilot's art;
Who saves the ship, may well re-set the chart.

The lone proud man! for him no Graces smiled,
No love the pause from jaded toil beguiled;
No twilight tryst exchanged the youthful vow;
No tender lip kiss'd trouble from that brow!
His sole Egeria (O supreme caprice!)
A crack'd, uncanny, warwitch of a Niece,
Who, at his death, found Syrian sands alone
Replace the lost grand desert she had known.
For rule in wastes by previous empire fit,
Had she not ruled a lonelier world in Pitt?

Yet all strong natures have affections strong,
Barr'd the free vents which to man's life belong;
Still springs well up, concentre sudden force,
And glad the waves of which they swell the course.
These are the minds that serve some abstract creed—
The Church, Ignatius; Fame, the Royal Swede;
More hot the ideal, human love unknown,
As chaste Pygmalion hugg'd to life a stone.
Pitt's human passion, his ideal dream,
His soul's twin Arcady and Academe,
Was England!—Not more rooted to the deep
The stubborn isle round which the tempests sweep
Than he to England; call him, if you will,
Too fond of power—'twas power for England still.
Through *this* he ruled; he spoke, and *this* was shown;
The Laws, the Land, the Altar, and the Throne,
Mere words with others, were to him the all
Left Man to prize and strive for since the Fall.

If read the orations, and forgot the age,
Words that breathed fire are ashes on the page.
Oh to have heard them in the breathless hall,
When Europe paled before the maddening Gaul;
When marts resounded with the trumpet's blare,
Fleets on the deep and banners in the air;
What time the dire Religion, stripp'd of God,
Shook tower and temple to the dust she trod,
And left the ruins dark beneath the frown
Of HIM whose bolt she mimick'd and drew down!
Then did the purpose (lost in calmer days)
Inspire with patriot life the purple phrase,
And under that stiff toga of the dead
Was heard the ringing of the Roman tread.

The very faults that later critics find
Were merits then—the unhesitating mind,
The self-reliance, lofty and severe,
That grand monotony—a soul sincere,
That scorn of fancy, that firm grasp of fact,
That dread to theorise in the hour to act,
Seem'd form'd to brave the elemental shock,
And type to England her own Ocean-rock.

The form, the voice, the bearing of the man
Became the Bayard, firm against the van
Of lances, standing on the perilous arch,
And singly staying armies in their march.
We see him still, the front with labour paled;
The eyes that rarely glow'd, but never quail'd,
Within disease, without the host of foes;
What grand contempt sustains that calm repose!
Gives the dread sneer that wither'd Erskine down,
And leaves the brow scarce ruffled by its frown.
We hear the elaborate swell of that full strain
Linking long periods in completest chain;
Staying the sense, from sentence sentence grows,
Till the last word comes clinching up the close.

To that Virgilian epic all unfit
Pindaric rage or Archilochian wit;
Nor needs it either! ne'er that style can pall,
Strength and majestic grace suffice for all.
Full, through the banks to weeds as flowers unknown
That stately sameness lapses largely on.

Poor in whate'er thy Cleons, France, possest,
The powers they fail'd in were with him the best.
Heaven unto each the opposing mission gave—
They to destroy were mighty, he to save.

If Freedom now her gradual reign extends,
And bounds to bloodless gains her loftiest ends—
If peerless, yet, our Commonwealth sublime
Sees its calm image in the glass of Time,
On which the angry States that grasp'd at more,
Dawn, and then, breath-like, vanish as before;
Honour to him, as to the saving star!
He was, and therefore we are what we are.

Mark next the man whom genius form'd to share
Pitt's lofty toils, and to his reign be heir:
With will as resolute, with heart as brave,
Temper more bland, and tongue more gently grave,
Tuned to a music as divinely sweet
As is the voice of Mercy: thus complete
In all the gifts that charm, instruct, and guide,
Apart from place lived WILBERFORCE, and died.
Wherefore? He served a cause for which the hour
Was yet unripe. *Fore*-knowledge is *not* power.
Rare are such souls; least rare in England. They
Form the vast viaducts of Truth; their way
Sweeps high o'er trodden thoroughfares; they knit
Hill-top with hill-top; Hopes delay'd commit
To them the conduct of each patient cause
By which advance the races. Them, applause
Spurs not, nor scorn deters; their faith concedes
No pliant compromise with courtlier creeds;
They cannot sit in councils that ignore
Or palter with their mission; all their lore
Illumes one end for which strives all their will;
Before their age they march invincible.
Oft in their lives by prosperous worldlings styled
Enthusiasts witless, or fanatics wild,

Each hour they live, their sober, serious strength
Works through Opinion its slow change; at length
Yesterday's vain dream is to-day's clear fact
Fed from unnumber'd rills, the cataract
Splits the obstructive rock, and bursts to day,
And rainbows form their colours from its spray.

Ask you a contrast?—See it in DUNDAS,
Timing the hour as truly as its glass.
Office was made for him, and he for it;
He felt that truth, and glued his soul to Pitt.
No shrewder minister e'er served a throne,
Or join'd his country's interests with his own.

With more superb a dignity of mien,
More patriot show, and much more private spleen,
More stately care for what the world may say,
But just as keen for titles, place, and pay,
In arm'd neutrality the GRENVILLES stand,
And name the terms on which they'll save the land.
All men are brethren, bound to help each other—
Gods! how each Grenville help'd his Grenville brother.

Who comes as one who through the starlit vine
Follow'd young Liber up the heights divine,
Inebriate not as earth's inglorious clay,
But drunk with wine as sun-flowers with the day;
Imbibing light till light itself imbues
The golden leaves which glitter through the dews?
Room, room! high place, O SHERIDAN, for thee!
Though yet below the thrones of the great Three;
On the same dais, and crown'd with richer gems
Than sunbeams kiss on their proud diadems.

If eloquence can find its surest test
In the degree to which it thrill the breast,
And not the enduring thought, which after-calm
Retains, then thine the sceptre and the palm:
For never Fancy shot more gorgeous ray,
Nor left air duller when it died away.

He did not rule opinion, shape a creed,
Control a council, or a nation lead;
These make the power that sage and statesman claim,
But to the orator applause is fame.
View'd at his best, while yet the nerves were strung,
While silvery yet the clear keen accents rung;
While yet erect and lithe the sprightly form,
And the eye lighten'd o'er the words of storm,
What time, before Humanity arraign'd,
(Guilty of empires, though to England gain'd),
Stood the grand Verres of the East;—not then
Had Tully's self more fired the souls of men.
Before that lengthen'd train and rapid flight
Of splendour dwindled Fox's disc of *light*,
And Burke's was paled; as when the irregular
Comet shoots flaming over the fix'd star.

Seen then, heard then, what could Ambition hope,
Or States bestow, that seem'd beyond his scope?
He whose wild youth had courted Scandal's frown,
Deserved her anger, and then laugh'd it down;
He whose gay forces seem'd, if not too light,
Too laxly disciplined for serious fight;
He who had known the failure, felt the sneer,
Smit burning brows in muttering, "It is here;"—
He now one hour the acknowledged lord of all,
Hears Pitt adjourn the agitated hall,

That brain may cool, and heart forget to swell,
And dawn relax the enchanter's midnight spell.
Out upón Time! the years roll on, and lo?
The broken wand, the fallen Prospero!
O shreds and rays of that once gorgeous soul!
O priceless pearl, dissolved amidst the bowl!
Hide—hide the vision; let our awe forbear
To note the trembling limbs, the glassy stare,—
To count the sparks which through the gathering shade
Start from charr'd embers, gleam on wrecks, and fade,—
To hear of bailiffs wrangling round the bed;—
Hush, and uncover!—Homage to the dead!—

Turn, where below the gangway (as between
Tory and Whig) was NORFOLK'S athlete seen.
In him the ideal of a class we scan,
Fair England's letter'd hardy gentleman.
Easy, yet earnest; high-bred, yet sincere;
To mob and monarch friendly, without fear;
Teres, rotundus—whether we admire,
The fine Greek scholar, the frank English squire;
Now capping verse with Johnson in Bolt Court,
Now lauding bull-baits as a British sport.
Still pleasing both the rugged and refined,
The first by manhood, and the last by mind.
Such WINDHAM was;—and where his merits halt,
Manhood or mind seems gainer by the fault.
Does some rude prejudice the smile provoke?
How the gnarl'd fibres grace the sturdy oak!
Or is the reasoning over-subtly wrought?
How the fine sword-play tests the sinewy thought!

Ev'n his high tones, a chord too sharp and keen,
Became the gesture quick and resolute mien,

As if in earnest to outclear their way,
And force on foes what truth had right to say.
Had he been born a soldier, he had fill'd
A mighty part—no strategist more skill'd,
No warier reason, and no bolder breast;
Add knighthood's stainless honour to the rest.

Ev'n in his death as manly as in life,
He fix'd the moment for the surgeon's knife;
Each wheel of State in cautious order set,
Lest clerks might miss what nations would regret;
Wrote to his friends with bold accustom'd hand,
Arguing the problems that perplex'd the land;
Struck the account that earth to heaven should bear
His last soft thought—the heart he loved to spare;
And, to life's partner life's dread risk unknown,
He closed the door from which there came no groan.
So, like a warrior, full of hardy life,
Smit by the bolt as victory ends the strife,
Each task completed, and each duty done,
He pass'd, in all his vigour, from the sun.

Pause for a while, and let the House adjourn—
Breathe calmer air;—But whither shall we turn?
To club or tavern as the whim prevails—
Nay, see Sir Joshua; come with him to Thrale's.
There, mark yon man, large-brow'd with thoughtful frown,
Arguing with Johnson;—Well, sir, argued down?—
No, Boswell's glorious savage butted full,
Yet our vast boa foils his mighty bull;
Now glides away in glittering volumes roll'd,
Now coils around in unrelenting fold.

Which shall prevail?—the boldest wight would fear
Now to adjudge—as then to interfere.
'Twixt Burke and Johnson Jove himself is mute,
Lest earth should rise to share in the dispute.
May we untrembling in the Elysian shore,
Hear them yet arguing better than before;
And as they glide down some ambrosial walk,
May blabbing phantoms Boswellise their talk!

Welcome associate forms where'er we turn,
Fill, Streatham's Hebé, the Johnsonian urn!
Mercurial GARRICK, hover to and fro,
Wing'd with light wit, and ever on tiptoe;
Laid now aside the rod which souls obey,
When to the shadow-world it frees the way;
Yet ev'n with mortals mindful of thine art,
Light'st thou on earth, it is in Sosia's part.

Apollo once, the deeds of Jove to tell,
Crack'd a dull tortoise, and then string'd its shell:
So vibrate, Boswell, with divine *afflatus*,
"*In Jovis dapibus testudo gratus;*"
Vow'd to Bolt Court, thine hollows feel its god,
Echo each thunder, shake with every nod.

What gaudy clown invites, yet shrinks from note,
Like Marlow blushing in Sir Fopling's coat?
Boswell stalks by him with contemptuous strut,
Garrick smiles joyful to behold a butt;
Reynolds, half doubtful if worth while to hear,
Fidgets his trumpet as he bends his ear;
But freed from Burke, and willing to unbend,
There rolls great Johnson, and salutes a friend,
From teasing wit, and (worse) the blockhead's jest,
Shields the shy victim with his burly breast.

So huge Alcides, on his club reclin'd,
And tired of fighting monsters for mankind,
Smooths awful brows, from solemn toil beguil'd,
And rocks in fostering arms a dreaming child.—
Child, *thou*, sweet bard of Auburn!—Child! what then?
A child inspired, and worth a world of men.
Scorn, if ye will, that wish the eye to gain;
Childhood, too loving, ever yet was vain.
Disdain that gall-less, yet resentful sigh,
When the world pass'd its gentlest minstrel by.
If *that* was envy, envy ne'er before
So much the look of wrong'd affection wore;
And ne'er did bee such golden honey bring
To ruder hands—yet, writhing, leave no sting.

Immortal conclave, Learning, Genius, Wit,
And all by stars that moved in concord lit—
Who could believe ye lived, and wrote, and thought
For that same age the schools of Diderot taught?
That Gospel truths spoke loud from Johnson's chair,
While the world's altars reel'd beneath Voltaire?
That Rousseau polish'd for the maids of Gaul
The virtuous page design'd to vitiate all,
While GOLDSMITH'S Vicar tells his harmless tale,
Smiles at the hearthstone, and converts the jail.

From that pure fount in England's Academe,
By fane and forum in expanding stream,
Went BURKE'S elaborate genius, strong and free,
As are all rivers that enlarge the sea,
But swerving slant with light-retaining waves,
Where rills rush on, and dribble into caves.
From first (judged right) consistent to the close,
Could Johnson's friend abet the Saviour's foes?—

Could Thought's high-priest the Halle's wild rabble cheer,
Or speed the cause that spawn'd a Robespierre?

No, true to Freedom when usurpers came
To blind her eyes, and govern in her name,
He wrote this truth, a guide to every time—
"They sentence freedom who unfetter crime."
I grant that Burke not always rightly view'd
The earthquake heave of that wrong multitude;—
Too much amidst the present ills to see
Causes long laid—results ordain'd to be;
But poets colour all that they regard,
And among statesmen Burke stands forth the bard;
By his own genius both obscured and fired,
At times inebriate, and at times inspired;
Has Truth ten sides, he must invent the eleventh,
And quit the earth to gain a heaven—the seventh!

"Is it for that—(no speeches read so well)—
That when Burke spoke he was the dinner-bell?"
Friend, if some actor murder Hamlet's part,
No line supplies the histrio's want of art—
Nay, the more beauty in the words prevail,
The more it chafes you if the utterance fail.
Shakespeare, ill-acted, do you run to hear?
And Burke, ill-spoken, would you stay to cheer?

"But what the faults that could admirers chill,
And thin the benches plain Dundas could fill?"—
Partly in matter—too intent to teach—
Too filed as essay not to flag as speech;
Too slight a fellowship with those around,
Words too ornate, and reasonings too profound;—

All this a Chatham might have brought in vogue!
Yes—but then Chatham did not speak in brogue!
A voice that made the brogue yet more displease,
A loud monotony of tuneless keys;
A form, if strong, to well-bred gazers coarse,
And that fatiguing fervour—waste of force:
Join these in Burke, and add his wisdom lack'd
What most St. Stephen's needs and values—tact.
Still when some cause with earth's large interests fraught,
Needed fit champion, grace gave way to thought—
Cumbrous in tilts where carpet-knights succeed,
By well-poised lance, and deftly-tutor'd steed;
Meet but for conflict in some amplest field,
That sweep of falchion, and that breadth of shield.
Thus, spite of faults his audience least excused,
Unmoved by praise, yet writhing when abused,
Tho' stern, yet sensitive; tho' haughty, kind;
Proof to all storm, yet feeling every wind,
Onward he pass'd, till at the farthest goal,
Freed, as from matter, conquering stood the soul.
And oh! what sap must thro' that genius run—
What hold on earth, what yearning towards the sun,
Which, met by granite, upward cleaves its way,
And high o'er forests bathes its crest in day!

Loud as a scandal on the ears of town,
And just as brief, the orator's renown!
Year after year debaters blaze and fade—
Scarce mark'd the dial ere departs the shade;
Words die so soon when fit but to be said,
Words only live when worthy to be read.

Already Fox is silent to our age,
Burke quits the rostrum to illume the page.

He did not waste his treasure as he went,
But hoarded wealth to pile his monument.
Now voice and manner can offend no more,
And pure from dross shines out the golden ore—
Down to oblivion sinks each rude defect,
And soars, anneal'd, the eternal intellect.

Thus is a torrent, if we stand too near,
Rough to the sight, and jarring to the ear;
But heard afar, when dubious of the way,
In paths perplex'd where forests dim the day,
Mellow'd from every discord, o'er the ground,
As from an unseen spirit, comes the sound—
That sound the step unconsciously obeys,
And, lured to light by music, threads the maze.

PART THIRD.

While States yet flourish, from the soil unseen
Mounts up the sap which gives the leaf its green—
Mounts and descends through each expanding shoot,
And knits the soaring summit to the root.

Thus, till the life-spring of a race expires,
The land brings forth the great men it requires;
Duly as Nature, with returning springs,
Renews the crowns of her own forest kings.

And Pitt and War are past; a gentler time;
Peace on the world, and Canning in his prime.
Beautiful shape, if lesser than the men
Who overshadow'd his young growth—what then?
Those tall old giants now were out of place—
Politer days need elegance and grace:
Of lesser stature, but of comelier form,
He rides no whirlwind, he directs no storm;
But storms and whirlwinds are not in the air;
Consult the glass—"Slight Changes, Showery, Fair!"
The Throne and Altar safe from Paine and Clootz;
In times so civil, giants would be brutes.
Though then, the Many were, in fact, the Few;
Some "liberal doctrines" are discuss'd, 'tis true—
Commercial Freedom,—not at once too much,
But that which Huskisson receives as such;
Emancipation,—not as yet in reach,
But still a glorious question—for a speech;
Reform in Parliament,—a coarse affront
To common sense—the rubbish of a Hunt·

Over such themes, all telling, urgent none,
Skimm'd with rare wit Etona's brilliant son.

Mark well his time, or else the man you wrong—
To times of danger earnest men belong:
Is the sea boisterous—must the storm be braved?
All hands to work, the vessel shall be saved:
Are waves becalm'd—spreads tamely safe the way?
The captain treats the sailors to a play.

Burke spoke for abstracts in the good and fit,
Fox for all humankind, for England, Pitt;
None of those causes much required defence
When Canning cull'd his flowers of eloquence;
Each of the three had self-esteem and pride—
Canning had these, and vanity beside;
And (though no mind less false or insincere)
Schemed for the gaze, and plotted for the cheer.
Thus while beneath a weakness which, we own,
The noblest natures have as largely known,
Courage and honour dwelt immovable,
His charming genius miss'd the master-spell—
A vague distrust pursued his glittering way,
And fear'd self-seeking in that self-display.
Ev'n in his speeches, at this distance read,
Much finely thought seems superfinely said;
Something theatric, which the admirer damps,
Smells—of the lamp? no, scholar; of the lamps!

Read him not, 'tis unfair; behold him rise;
And hear him speak!—the House all ears and eyes;
His one sole rival—Brougham—has just sate down,
Closing a speech that might have won the crown,
If English Members took their oaths by Styx,
And the Whig front bench were the Athenian Pnyx;

Canning is up! the beautiful bright face!
The front of power, the attitude of grace!
Now every gesture in decorous rest,
Now sweeps the action, now dilates the crest;
And the voice, clear as a fife's warlike thrill,
Rings through the lines, half dulcet and half shrill.
Fair was his nature, judged by its own laws;
Say it coquets to win the gaze it draws—
Views every strife in which its lance it wields
More as gay lists than solemn battle-fields—
Sports in bright pastime with its own high powers,
And tricks out serious laurel with slight flowers;—
Granted, yet still, when candidly survey'd,
The jouster's art is not the huckster's trade;
And love of praise is not the lust of gain;
And at the worst, repeat it, he was vain.

But what rich life—what energy and glow!
Cordial to friend, and chivalrous to foe!
Concede all foibles harshness would reprove;
And what choice attributes remain to love!

See him the Arthur of his dazzling ring—
Wit's various knighthood round its poet-king;
Each from the chief, whose genius types a race,
Catching some likeness in reflected grace.
WARD, with coy genius critically fine,
Afraid to warm, yet studying rules to shine,
Neat in an eloquence of words well placed—
A trim town-garden, in the best trim taste.
GRANT, linking powers the readiest and most rare,
With one wise preference for an easy-chair;
Deliberate HUSKISSON, with front austere
Lit into sunshine by the laugh of FRERE;

Accomplish'd WELLESLEY, equally at home
In Ind or Hellas, Westminster or Rome,
Vigorous in action, elegant in speech,
Scholar and Statesman, Lælius-like in each;
Supréme in that which Cicero calls "The Urbane;"
Graceful as Canning, and perhaps as vain.

In stalwart contrast, large of heart and frame,
Destined for power, in youth more bent on fame,
Sincere, yet deeming half the world a sham,
Mark the rude handsome manliness of LAMB!
None then foresaw his rise; ev'n now but few
Guess right the man so many thought they knew;
Gossip accords him attributes like these—
A sage good-humour based on love of ease,
A mind that most things undisturb'dly weigh'd,
Nor deem'd their metal worth the clink it made.
Such was the man, *in part*, to outward show;
Another man lay coil'd from sight below—
As mystics tell us that this fleshly form
Enfolds a subtler which escapes the worm,
And is the true one which the Maker's breath
Quicken'd from dust, and privileged from death.
His was a restless, anxious intellect;
Eager for truth, and pining to detect;
Each ray of light that mind can cast on soul,
Chequering its course, or shining from its goal,
Each metaphysic doubt—each doctrine dim—
Plato or Pusey—had delight for him.
His mirth, though genial, came by fits and starts—
The man was mournful in his heart of hearts.
Oft would he sit or wander forth alone;
Sad—why? I know not; was it ever known?

* CIC., *Brutus*, 46.

Tears came with ease to those ingenuous eyes—
A verse, if noble, bade them nobly rise.
Hear him discourse, you'd think he scarcely felt;
No heart more facile to arouse or melt;
High as a knight's in some Castilian lay,
And tender as a sailor's in a play.

Thus was the Being with his human life
At variance—noiseless, for he veil'd the strife;
The Being, serious, gentle, shy, sincere,
The life St. Stephen's, and a Court's career;
Train'd first in salons gay with roué wits,
And light with morals the reverse of Pitt's.
As England's chief, let others judge his claim,
And strike just balance between praise and blame
I from the Minister draw forth the man,
Such as I saw before his power began,
And glancing o'er the noblest of our time,
Who won the heights it wears out life to climb,
On that steep table-land which, viewed afar,
Appears so proud a neighbour of the star,
And, reach'd, presents dead levels in its rise
More dimm'd than valleys are by vapoury skies,
I mark not one concealing from mankind
A larger nature or a lovelier mind,
Or leaving safer from his own gay laugh
That faith in good which is the soul's best half.

There, form'd to please, young TEMPLE we behold—
Young for the man who never will be old—
Most graced disciple in that school of thought
And style which Canning rather led than taught;
The Eclectic School of thought, which flirts with many,
Too worldly-wise to wed itself to any;

Free as it lists to differ or agree
With Locke or Leibnitz as the case may be;
Its change no sect can inconsistent call;
It shares with each enough to club with all.
The style—that lifts the subject into play,
Now firmly grasps it, and now jerks away:
When some keen argument would foil reply,
The fencer swerves, and lets the thrust go by—
Cries with a smile, "But empty air you pierce,"
Turns the quick wrist, and presto! pinks in tierce.
To school and style—to all he takes from art—
Temple adds natural charm; he has a heart;
He lets you mark its swell, and hear its beat;
From yours it takes, to yours returns the heat;
Without a mask it looks forth from his face,
Gives to each mode a vivifying grace;
Bluster seems spirit, and a trivial jest
The cordial burst of sunshine in the breast.
Worthy of love, in him is never view'd
The statesman's vulgarest vice, ingratitude:
Whate'er the means by which he seeks his end,
He ne'er to fortune sacrificed a friend.

Behind this light group, scholarlike, yet gay,
Stands thy pale shade, mysterious CASTLEREAGH!
Note that harmonious tragic mask of face,
Rigid in marble stillness; not a trace
In that close lip, so bland, and yet so cold—
In that smooth brow, so narrow, yet so bold,
Of fancy, passion, or the play of mind;
But Fate has pass'd there, and has left behind
The imperial look of one who rules mankind.
They much, in truth, misjudge him, who explain
His graceless language by a witless brain.

So firm his purpose, so resolv'd his will,
It almost seem'd a craft to speak so ill—
As if, like Cromwell, flashing towards his end
Through cloudy verbiage none could comprehend.
Subtle and keen as some old Florentine,
And as relentless in disguised design,
But courteous with his Erin's native ease,
And strengthening sway by culturing arts that please;
Stately in quiet high-bred self-esteem,
Fair as the Lovelace of a lady's dream,
Fearless in look, in thought, in word, and deed—
These gifts may fail to profit States!—Agreed;
But when men have them, States they always lead.
And much in him, as Time shall melt away
The mists which dim all names too near our day,
Shall stand forth large; far ends in Pitt's deep thought,
By him, if rudely, were securely wrought;
And though, train'd early in too harsh a school,
He guess'd not how the needful bonds of rule
Become the safer when the cautious hand,
As grows a people, lets its swathes expand,
He served, confirm'd, enlarged his country's sway;
Ireland forgives him not—Three Kingdoms may.

There is an eloquence which aims at talk—
A muse, though winged, that prefers to walk;
Its easy graces so content the eye,
You'd fear to lose it if it sought to fly;
Light and yet vigorous, fearless yet well-bred,
As once it moved in TIERNEY'S airy tread.
Carelessly, as a wit about the town
Chats at your table some huge proser down,
He lounged into debate, just touch'd a foe,—
"Laughter and cheers"—A touch, Sir? what a blow!

Declaiming never; with a placid smile
He bids you wonder why you are so vile;
One hand politely pointing out your crime,
The other—in his pocket all the time.

Many since then affect that easy way—
The Conversational's the vogue to-day;
But ease, the surest sign of strength in men,
Is to the oration hard as to the pen.
That talk which art as eloquence admits
Must be the talk of thinkers and of wits—
A living stream, which breaks from golden mines,
And by its overflow reveals their signs,
And not the wish-wash that, from five to eight,
Lags, in small Lethès, through the dead debate.

Who rises now, with an audacious grace?
What tall pre-Adam of our trouser'd race,
Breech'd and top-booted,—the rever'd costume
Which Gilray gave our grandsires in their bloom?
And hark! he speaks; you cheer him, yet you find
His dress is less old-fashion'd than his mind.
Fine, nervous, sturdy, free-born British—rant;
Well, pass the word, some fustian, but not cant.
No new sham-bitters froth that heady scorn
But hot old amber brew'd by Parson Horne.
Sincere if wayward, thoroughbred if bold,
Survey the well-born demagogue of old;
Too rich to bribe, and much too proud for power,
And as to fear—a fico for the Tower!
In youth more popular than Fox; in age,
When BURDETT spoke, few actors more the rage.
None gifted more to please the eye and ear,
The form so comely and the voice so clear.

Pitt's surly squires resign'd their port, and ran
To hear the dangerous but large-acred man;
And trimmers shrank into yet smaller space,
Awed by such scorn of tyranny and place.

Some speak above their knowledge, some below.
What Burdett knew (not much), he let you know.
His speech ran over each Æolian chord,
So vaguely pleasing that it never bored.
Nor was it rude; whatever fear it woke
In breasts patrician, a patrician spoke;
And if no letter'd stores it could display,
Still over letters it would pause and play,
Surprise an elegance, conceive a trope,
And pose logicians with a line from Pope.

Or young or old, no patriot more alone—
Whigs claim him not, and Radicals disown.
Ye modern liberal Benthamitic crew,
Nought had that Gracchus in top-boots with you!
Talk not to him of moral revolutions,
Of normal schools, mechanics' institutions;
The heads of valiant freemen should be thick—
Your puny scholar scarce can stand a brick.
Talk not of means against intimidation,
And secret votes to womanise the nation;
Freemen are those who, every threat defying,
Fight to the poll while cabbage-stalks are flying.

With what amaze the stout old rebel saw
His Irish rival break, yet shirk, the law,
All patriot rules portentously reverse,
Turn Freedom's cap into Fortunio's purse!
Bid Mike and Paddy, much bewilder'd, know
"Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow:

Your pence to-day, your liberties next year,
Erin-go-bragh!—I thank you for that cheer;"
The bargain struck; if aught remains to strike,
The blow descends on Paddy and on Mike;
Ev'n thus a chess king, castled in his nook,
Plays out his pawns and skulks behind a rook.

The Briton saw, and felt his hour was come;
His stout heart quail'd, his manly voice was dumb;
And as old Cleon, in the Athenian play,
Snubb'd by the sausage-vendor, skulks away,
Sir Francis left the Demus he had led,
And Whigs install'd the sausage-man instead.
Peace to his memory! grant him rash and vain,
'Twas the heart's blood that rose to clog the brain;
No trading demagogue, in him we scan
That pith of nations, the bold natural man,
Whose will may vibrate as the pulses throb,
Now scare a monarch, now defy a mob;
Dauntless alike to prop the State or shock,
To fire the Capitol or leap the Rock.
But not to Erin's coarser chief deny,
Large if his faults, Time's large apology;
Child of a land that ne'er had known repose,
Our rights and blessings, Ireland's wrongs and woes;
Hate, at St. Omer's into caution drill'd,
In Dublin law-courts subtilised and skill'd;
Hate in the man, whatever else appear
Fickle or false, was steadfast and sincere.
But with that hate a nobler passion dwelt—
To hate the Saxon was to love the Celt.
Had that fierce railer sprung from English sires,
His creed a Protestant's, his birth a squire's,
No blander Pollio whom our Bar affords,
Had graced the woolsack and cajoled "my Lords."

Pass by his faults, his art be here allow'd,
Mighty as Chatham, give him but a crowd;
Hear him in senates, second-rate at best,
Clear in a statement, happy in a jest;
Sought he to shine, then certain to displease;
Tawdry yet coarse-grain'd, tinsel upon frieze:
His Titan strength must touch what gave it birth;
Hear him to mobs, and on his mother earth!

Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
Wall'd by wide air, and roof'd by boundless heaven;
Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
And wave on wave flow'd into space away.
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
Even to the centre of the hosts around;
And as I thought rose the sonorous swell,
As from some church-tower swings the silvery bell.
Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide,
It glided, easy as a bird may glide;
To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
It play'd with each wild passion as it went;
Now stirr'd the uproar, now the murmur still'd,
And sobs or laughter answer'd as it will'd.

Then did I know what spells of infinite choice,
To rouse or lull, has the sweet human voice;
Then did I seem to seize the sudden clue
To the grand troublous Life Antique—to view
Under the rock-stand of Demosthenes,
Mutable Athens heave her noisy seas.

Eno' of Cleons; in his later day,
Instead of Pericles, accept a GREY.
O'er the strong manhood of his hardy sense
Flow'd in loose pomp a regal eloquence;

Methinks I see him yet, the stately
With form erect, and front Olympian;
With the full sweep of the imperial hand,
That seem'd to stretch a sceptre o'er the land;
And the deep quiet of those lustrous eyes,
Which lighten'd, Jove-like, but from tranquil skies.

Some stint large forces to a single theme—
Touch the one jet, and upwards leaps the stream;
Turn off the tap-cock, and the stream is gone,
And where the fountain sparkled stands a stone.
Alas! what springs of ancient inspiration
Dried in the ink that sign'd Emancipation!
There, in that Askalon of old debate,
What generous ardour and what pious hate!
There each great leader found his amplest field;
There each crude novice learn'd his arms to wield;
There from the Muse young RUSSELL lured away,
First dared the dragons he has lived to slay;
There COPLEY'S pennon stream'd against the gale;
There BROUGHAM, great Talus, plied his iron flail;
There lighten'd HORNER'S sword, soon sheathed for ever;
There PEEL, decorous with his Median quiver,
Though to wound either side humanely loth,
Shot each in turn, and put an end to both.

But one there was, to whom with joint consent
All yield the crown in that high argument:
Mark where he sits; gay flutterers round the Bar,
Gathering like moths attracted by the star;
In vain the ballet and the ball invite,
Ev'n beaux look serious—PLUNKETT speaks to-night.
Mark where he sits, his calm brow downward bent,
Listening, revolving, passive, yet intent.

Revile his cause, his lips vouchsafe no sneer;
Defend it—still from him there comes no cheer—
No sign without of what he feels or thinks,
Within, slow fires are hardening iron links.
Now one glance round, now upward turns the brow,
Hush'd every breath; he rises—mark him now!
No grace in feature, no command in height,
Yet his whole presence fills and awes the sight;
Wherefore? you ask; I can but guide your guess—
Man has no majesty like earnestness:
His that rare warmth—collected central heat—
As if he strives to check the heart's loud beat;
Tame strong conviction and indignant zeal,
And leave you free to think as he must feel.
Tones slow, not loud, but deep-drawn from the breast,
Action unstudied, and at times suppress;
But as he near'd some reasoning's massive close,
Strain'd o'er his bending head, his strong arms rose,
And sudden fell, as if from falsehood torn
Some grey old keystone, and hurl'd down with scorn.
His diction that which most exalts debate,
Terse and yet smooth, not florid, yet ornate;
Prepared enough; long-meditated fact,
By words at will, made sinuous and compact;
With gems the Genius of the Lamp must win,
Not scatter'd loose, but welded firmly in
So that each ornament the most display'd
Deck'd not the sheath, but harden'd more the blade;
Your eye scarce caught the dazzle of the show,
Ere shield and cuirass crash'd beneath the blow.

Far different he, who, in a later day,
Shot o'er those floors a sportive meteor ray,

The glittering wisp of that morass Repeal,
Delighting all, convincing no one, SHIEL.
The Kean of Orators; with equal art
He cons a whisper and prepares a start—
What fire, what freshness!—why suspend the praise?
Does he believe one syllable he says?
Perhaps! who knows?—it is the old debate;
Do actors feel the rage they simulate?
Some do, some not; Siddons was cool enough
To pause from murder for a pinch of snuff;
Macready's Tell shoots just above his son,
And his hand trembles when the play is done;
But both, however moved by what they act,
Alike are honest when they come to fact;
And so was Shiel; or feign'd or felt his rage,
No heart more genuine beat—when off the stage.

Fancy is ever popular—all like
The sheeted flame which shines, but does not strike;
And Shiel had these fine merits above all,
Point without sting, and satire without gall;
A courteous irony so free from scoff,
The grateful victim felt himself let off.
Where worst O'Connell, there was Shiel the best—
He understood the audience he addrest;
Declaim'd, not bullied; rallied, not abused,
His angriest word a Hotspur had excused.
St. Stephen takes not from St. Giles his art,
But is a true good gentleman at heart.

Some speakers are, who, wanting warmth or skill,
Speak, as mere speakers (hush, a secret!), ill;
Yet gain a station that we all revere,
Proud to possess them, tho' not pleased to hear.

All wealth is rank—all wealth of every kind;
And these men are the millionaires of mind.
'Mid such, precedence MACKINTOSH may claim;
His style was lecture, erudite and tame;
Polemics theorised in so dry a shape,
His kindest listeners gulp'd them with a gape;
While, in strange contrast to the frigid sense,
The toiling gesture's random vehemence.
The chilly audience eyed the swinging arm,
And envying sigh'd, "Himself he can keep warm."
But for the few who heard the lecture close,
No richer globes have e'er emerged from snows;
Each own'd his duty its reward had won,
And felt relieved to think that duty done.

Not thus MACAULAY; in that gorgeous mind
Colour and warmth the genial light combined;
Learning but glow'd into his large discourse,
To heat its mass and vivify its force.

The effects he studied by the words were made,
More than the art with which the words were said.
Perhaps so great an orator was ne'er
So little of an actor; half the care
Giv'n to the speaking which he gave the speech
Had raised his height beyond all living reach:
Ev'n as it was, a master's power he proved
In the three tests—he taught, he charm'd, he moved.
Few compass one; whate'er their faults may be,
Great orators alone achieve the three.

Best in his youth, when strength grew doubly strong,
As the swift passion whirl'd its blaze along;
In riper years his blow less sharply fell,
Looser the muscle, tho' as round its swell;

The dithyramb sober'd to didactic flow,
And words as full of light had less of glow.
Take then his best; and first the speaker view,
The bold broad front paled to the scholar's hue,
And eye abstracted in its still, clear blue.
Firm on the floor he sets his solid stand,
Rare is his gesture, scarcely moves a hand;
Full and deep-mouth'd, as from a cave profound,
Comes his strong utterance with one burst of sound,
Save where it splits into a strange wild key,
Like hissing winds that struggle to be free.
And at the close, the emotions, too repress
By the curb'd action, o'erfatigue the breast,
And the voice breaks upon the captive ear,
And by its failure, proves the rage sincere.
His style not essay, if you once admit
Speech as sense spoken, essay as sense writ; *

* However carefully prepared, Lord Macaulay's parliamentary speeches were composed as orations, not as essays. Indeed, many years ago, before he went to India, he observed to the author of the lines which render so inadequate a tribute to his honoured name, that he himself never committed to writing words intended to be spoken—upon the principle, that, in the process of writing, the turn of diction, and even the mode of argument, might lose the vivacity essential to effective oration, and, in fact, fall into *essay*. His wonderful powers of memory enabled him to compose, correct, and retain, word by word, the whole of a speech, however long, without the aid of the pen. The author does not know whether Lord Macaulay continued, at a later period, to hold a theory on oratorical composition contradicted by the practical success with which orators still more skilful, such as Lord Brougham and Mr. Canning, contrived to make the parts of their speeches which had been written with great care, not only dovetail into other parts delivered extempore, but appear bursts of sudden inspiration.

It was certainly, however, the brilliant art with which his speeches were composed upon *oratorical* principles, both as to arrangement of argument and liveliness of phraseology, that gave them that prodigious effect which they (at least the earlier ones) produced upon a mixed audience, and entitles this eminent personage to the fame of a very considerable orator. I may be pardoned for insisting upon this, since in the various obituary notices of

Not essay—rather, argued declamation,
Prepared, 'tis true, but always as oration.
A royal Eloquence, that paid, in state,
A ceremonious visit to Debate.
As unlike Burke as mind could be to mind,
He took one view—the broadest sense could find—
Never forsook it from the first to last,
And on that venture all his treasure cast.
Just as each scene throughout a drama's plan
Unfolds the purpose which the first began,
His speaking dramatised one strong plain thought,
To fuller light by each link'd sentence brought,
A home-truth deck'd—where, led but by the star,
Burke, sailing on, discover'd truths afar.

Lord Macaulay there has appeared to me a disposition to depreciate his success as an orator, while doing the amplest justice to his merits as a writer. He was certainly not a debater, nor did he ever attempt to be so; but in the higher art of sustained, elaborate oration, no man in our age has made a more vivid effect upon an audience. His whole turn of mind and of style was indeed eminently oratorical; and it might be much more correctly said of him that his essays were orations, than that his orations were essays. His chief merits, in written compositions, are those of a man who has a large and miscellaneous audience constantly in his thought. The orator must never *bore;* he must never be obscure; he must never seem hesitating in his assertions; he must not be minutely refining, nor metaphysically subtle, in his philosophical deductions;—all the knowledge he thinks fit to press into his service he must seek to render clear to the commonest understanding; all his imagination must be employed, not in creating new worlds of thought, but in bringing thoughts the most generally admitted as sound into brilliant light. The rapid style of short sentences, in bold links of sense, a quick succession of pictures, in strong outline and vivid colour—these, students in general would probably admit to be the elements of oratorical composition, according to classic precepts and models; and in these will be found the most striking beauties of Lord Macaulay as a writer. Were this the place or the moment, it might not be difficult to show that the marked prevalence of these dazzling and effective qualities almost necessitates the sacrifice of other merits which are foreign to the oratorical school of composition, but which have their proper place in critical essay and judicial history. But this inquiry is scarcely for our generation. The conquests of so great a genius must receive the sanction of time, before the national jealousy will permit a close survey of their boundaries.

He triumph'd thus where learning fails the most,
Perplex'd no college, but harangued a host—
Minds the most commonplace rejoiced to view
How much of knowledge went to things they knew.
From ground most near their own trite household walls,
His Lamp's kind Genius raised its magic halls.

Thus much in proof of his least-granted claim,
What rests is read!—who reads will guard his fame.
If in his writing far more than his speech
His zeal mislead us where his lore should teach,
Few can take part in England's stormy life,
Nor bound their scope to what may serve their strife:
Nay, even the calmest schoolman rears his torch
So that its shadow dims the adverse porch.
Measured by those himself admits as tall,
Or lifts on stilts if others deem them small,
The favour'd priesthood of that famous sect,
Which, leading many, keep themselves select—
And in their porphyry chamber, I admit,
Have rear'd their own blood-royalty of wit;—
Compared, in short, with wigs, his chosen race,
Where amongst *them* shall we assign his place?
In that rare gift—few gifts more rare in men—
The twofold eloquence of voice and pen,
Brougham as a speaker has more strength and sweep,
Burke as a writer is more grave and deep;
But Brougham, as writer, less his strength has proved;
And Burke, as speaker, less his audience moved:
Nor Burke nor Brougham to Whigs we wholly cede,
For Brougham has stray'd from, Burke renounced their creed;
But this bright partisan was all their own,
His pomp of laurel in their soil was grown;

To guard their strongholds he directs his toils,
And to their tombs he dedicates his spoils.
This given to party,—what to England, say,
Left to endure, when parties fade away?—
To her young sons the model of a life,
Mild in its calm, majestic in its strife;
To her rich language blocks of purest ore,
To her grand blazon one proud quartering more!

Happy the man revered for plain good sense,
Perhaps the sole unenvied excellence!
Dulness his wisdom, wit his worth shall own,
The first ne'er puzzled, nor the last outshone;
Thus to his shore floats every vagrant waif,
And if but well-born, England calls him "safe."
So Whig or Tory, each with pride installs
Archons in Ponsonbys and Percevals—
Leaders not brisk eno' to be unsteady,
Nor yet so slow but what they can be ready:
Such plain good sense, no sense could be more plain,
Seem'd crown'd in person during ALTHORPE'S reign—
A reign as sovereign both o'er dunce and wit,
As Genius gave in right divine to Pitt.
But then that sense, if plain, was wondrous good—
Precious the grain, tho' common seem'd the wood.
And, too, that sense by Fancy so undeckt,
Took a strange grace from our own charm'd respect
For the mild image of benignant worth;
Honour as true as ever said to Earth,
"Confide;" inbred urbanity as mild
As e'er disarm'd the foe on which it smil'd,
Soothing all strife, yet yielding no belief—
These were the jewels in his crown of *Chief*.
Long may such gifts o'er verbal arts prevail,
For in their failing England's self shall fail.

A different woof, but still of English stuff,
As plain, as honest, much more hard and rough,
In BENTINCK, dignified a style uncouth,
Made pride seem spirit, and rude language truth.
All have their dross;—thro' his there largely ran
The genuine metal of an earnest man;
One of those natures in which none suspect
The latent heat of heart and intellect,
Till in the atmosphere of common ire
At wrongs in common flashes out their fire,
The mass, expanding as the flames escape,
Takes from mere warmth new character, new shape.
Thus by no selfish anger roused to strife,
The whole Man rose transform'd from his old life;
The lounging member seldom in his place,
And then, with thoughts remote upon a race,
Stung into sympathy with others, blends
His life with theirs, and ease for ever ends.
Each task by which industrious toil supplies
What culture lacks or native bent denies,
Conscience itself imposes;—in his creed,
Who shuns one labour is unfit to lead.
Thus, victim of his own remorseless zeal,
Life, overwound, snapt sudden at the wheel,
And the same grief which England gives the brave
Slain at their post, did homage to his grave.

To me there's something bordering on the great
In him who labours—not for self:—the State,
In its caprice, may give him no reward;
Perhaps he bores, and is not born a lord.
The House may cough—his voice no coughs can drown;
Reports cut short—no Press can cut him down.

Still he toils on—for what? To be of use,
To prune a tax, or weed up an abuse.
Each hour for rest, for home, for health to grudge,
Unpaid, a servant, and unthank'd, a drudge;
And his work done, sink fameless in the tomb:
Such men have worth—nine such might make a Home

Tho' Bar and Senate are so near akin,
Our Senate's ear great Lawyers seldom win.
In truth, St. Stephen grudges every knight
The spurs he earns in other fields of fight.
ERSKINE?—too femininely vain of fame;
WETHERELL?—too rabid; SCARLETT?—much too tame.
In fine, a lawyer's copiousness is such,
Each has a something for the House too much.
Exceptions are; rough DUNNING split the ear,
Wedged in his logic, and tore forth a cheer.
Bland MURRAY ruled their Lordships with a sway
Scarce less than Lyndhurst's lofty sense to-day.
Hush'd were the benches when, with careless ease,
With accents matchless for melodious keys,
With words the choicest, that seem strung by chance,
COCKBURN's frank mind reveal'd its large expanse.
Still WHITESIDE's genius charms both foes and friends,
So headlong force with sparkling fancy blends;
As torrents flash the more their rush descends.
Still when CAIRNS rises, tho' at dawn of day,
The sleepers wake, and feel rejoiced to stay,
As his clear reasonings in light strength arise
Like Doric shafts admitting lucent skies.
But these are living, and their statues wait
Yet for the pedestal. Walhalla's gate
Opes only for the Dead!—What hand unknown
Shall carve for Brougham's vast image the grand throne?

Back to our bounds!
—Who heard and can forget
Mellifluous FOLLETT? Yet I hear him—yet,
Plaintive and softly deep, his tones enthral
Reason and heart; in later days, of all,
The Master of Persuasion. Sterner arms
He wielded not; his weapons were like charms.
Nor wit, nor passion, nor embellish'd phrase,
Nor jests that stab, nor fancies that amaze;
But ere three words were spoken, to your soul
The irresistible enchanter stole.
One sovereign gift was his—he ruled by it;
'Twas that which gave autocracy to Pitt—
A quick electric sympathy which ran
Thro' the whole audience forth from the whole man;
He seem'd in all to place an equal trust,
Justice his aim,—what Englishman not just?
The ennobling spirit in himself appeal'd
To that true nobleness which, oft conceal'd,
Still in our Senate represents our race,
And is the guardian genius of the place.

Few, who at ease their Members' speeches read,
Guess the hard life of members who succeed;
Pass by the waste of youthful golden days,
And the dread failure of the first essays—
Grant that the earlier steeps and sloughs are past,
And Fame's broad highway stretches smooth at last;
Grant the success, and now behold the pains:
Eleven to three—Committee upon Drains!
From three to five—self-commune and a chop;
From five to dawn, a bill to pass or stop;
Which, stopt or pass'd, leaves England much the same.
Alas for genius staked in such a game!

When as "the guerdon" in the grasp appears,
"Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears."

Farewell, fine humorist, finer reasoner still,
Lively as Luttrell, logical as Mill,
Lamented BULLER; just as each new hour
Knit thy stray forces into steadfast power,
Death shut thy progress from admiring eyes,
And gave thy soul's completion to the skies;
More richly gifted, tho' to him denied
Ev'n thine imperfect honours, WINTHROP* died;
Died—scarce a promise of his youth redeem'd,
And never youth more bright in promise seem'd.
Granta beheld him with such loving eyes
Lift the light lance that struck at every prize;
What the last news?—the medal Praed has won;
What the last joke?—Praed's epigram or pun;
And every week that club-room, famous then,†
Where striplings settled questions spoilt by men,
When grand MACAULAY sate triumphant down,
Heard PRAED'S reply, and long'd to halve the crown.

Yet in St. Stephen's this bright creature fail'd—
Yes, but o'er failure had he not prevail'd,
If his that scope in time which victory needs?
Fame is a race, he who runs on succeeds.
True in all contests—in the Senate's most;
There but small way till half a life is lost:
Long years a name the Public scarcely knows,
From roots occult unnoticed grows and grows,
Till inch by inch it widens into space,
Towers o'er the grove and suns itself—in Place.

* Winthrop Praed.
† The Union Debating Society of Cambridge.

But 'tis not only youth that dies too soon,
An eve may close regretted more than noon;
And England felt what light of temperate day
Faded from earth when PEEL had pass'd away.
"Soft," cries a friend, "o'er smould'ring fires you go;
Describe the Orator; the Statesman—no;
Suppress his deeds—enlarge on his discourse!"
A centaur, friend, is man as well as horse;
And paint a horse as ably as you can,
It is no centaur, if you add not man.
In Peel (and thus his main success was won)
Statesman and Orator were blent in one;
His genius, firm in each ascent it tries,
"Like Virgil's verse, walks highest, but not flies."*
Powers strong by nature, and by culture skill'd,
In few more various, were in none so drill'd;
Voice rare in volume and sonorous force,
Words free of flow as rivers in their course;
Manner, form, feature, such as well befit
The Hall whose elders yet remember'd Pitt;
Scholastic lore, and taste refined and pure,—
With half these gifts much smaller men secure
The fame that crowns the Orator;—take Shiel!
Less than the Orator and more was Peel—
Perhaps his fault was want of self-escape;
His cautious mind seem'd consciously to drape
Its formal toga round its decent shape;
Yet in such fault, if fault it be, there lay
The subtle secret of his wondrous sway;
Men view'd his temperance as the proof of health,
And want of show seem'd modesty in wealth.
Nor think his speech was merely prudent sense—
It had its own artistic eloquence;

* COWLEY.

Vigorous when brief, majestic when verbose,
In statement ample, and in answer close;
But so the speech was with the speaker blent,
That his own fame was its best ornament.
Turn to the Statesman, and in him behold
The man at once most timid and most bold;
At each new thought he paused, and fear'd, and trembled,
And while he doubted, to himself dissembled.
But when conviction was from doubt evolved,
It fill'd, it ruled him, and he stood resolved,
Prepared for ills the bravest dread to see,
As is the Turk for what the fates decree;
And both their courage and its causes sum
In the same formula—"The Hour is come."

The taunt which stings the honour to the core;
The look which says, "False friend, we trust no more;"
The pangs of chiefs who 'mid their foes' applause
Resign their standards and renounce their cause—
In ills like these, more bitter than the grave,
Show me a fatalist more calmly brave!
Grandeur or vileness this?—the test is plain;
Condemn the apostate?—first make clear the gain.
The convert canonise?—first prove the loss,
And show the martyr bow'd beneath the cross.
The test fails here—each loss was re-supplied,
In every shift he went with wind and tide;
The same slow change the nation's mind had known,
And praised his wisdom to exalt its own.
But gain he could not or in power or fame—
That risk'd sincerely, this resign'd for blame;
And in that nature, so reserved and still,
No stern self-glory cheer'd the joyless will.

The blame that reach'd him was no random thrust—
From those who launch'd, his reason felt it just;
And the same conscience that had finely weigh'd
Each straw that turn'd the balance it obey'd,
Excused the shaft to which it lent the string,
And in excusing doubly felt the sting.
Is there no medium? and for one who seems,
Wide tho' his space, so far from both extremes?
Must we an image so familiar paint,
Horn'd as a fiend, or halo'd as a saint?
Responsibility! that heaviest word
In all our language! the imperious lord
Of Duty, and to him who rules a State,
Strong in proportion as its slave is great:
RESPONSIBILITY—accept that clue,
And all the maze of motive clears to view.

Take some firm patriot who can boast with truth
He ne'er has changed a dogma since his youth,
Make him First Minister, and bid him then
Deal—with dead doctrines?—No, with living men.
Let Bright responsible for England be,
And straight in Bright a Chatham we should see,
Improving rifles, lecturing at reviews,
And levying taxes for reforms—in screws.
Make Spooner (no man is more free from guile)
The anxious Viceroy of the Emerald Isle;
Would Spooner be a renegade from truth
If his first words were "money for Maynooth?"

On no man living as on Peel bestow'd
This solemn burthen; none more felt the load;
He had not party's, he had England's trust—
When firm, she call'd him cautious; yielding, just.

England has ever in her secret heart
Most favour'd chiefs, who somewhat stand apart
From those they lead: let brethren love each other,
But if too much, they may neglect their mother.
Pitt in his prime was not a party-man,
And Peel seem'd born to end as Pitt began.

The more his reasonings, in their watchful range,
Seem'd guarding outlets for prudential change,
The more scar'd followers groan'd, "Can we confide?"
The more the Public hail'd the common guide,
It liked his wealth—the wealthy want not place;
It liked his birth—trade has its pride of race;
It liked his sober yet imposing mien;
It liked his life, in which no flaw was seen;
And thus to his, as a judicial mind,
The general cause the general trust consign'd;
From the vex'd Bar opinion snatch'd its chief,
Wrench'd from his hands each client's partial brief,
And raised the counsel of a special plea
Into the judge, whose voice was a decree.
And, in return, his conscience more and more
Revised each cause it had sustain'd before,
Till all old questions merged afresh in one,
"Should, for the good of England, *this* be done?
If so, of all men I must do it!—why?
Because none else could so succeed as I!"

To me, who seek to analyse, not judge,
Exempt alike from favour and from grudge—
To me, so clearly, when with care defined,
Stands forth excused his conscience-weighted mind,
That where I doubt his course, I dare not blame;
I too am English, and my share I claim
Of our joint heirloom in his English name.

But were the followers wrong if their belief
Clung to the cause deserted by its chief?
If loud their wrath, can honesty condemn?
Candour, absolving him, excuses them;
And if, but peace to the old feuds!—the life
Of hate should be coeval with its strife;
In foreign fields our lavish blood is shed;
War ends, and vengeance sleeps beside the dead;
Are we more generous to barbaric foes
Than to our brethren?—does the conflict close,
And the wrath rest, when England is the field,
And the dispute—the two sides of her shield?

Fast by the hour a veilèd Future stands;
Distrust has loosed the girdle of the lands;
Pale, but prepared, the Isle's lone spirit sees
The waves that whiten, tho' yet mute the breeze,
And shapes her trident to her anchor:—Call
Her sons around, and let the tempest fall!
Were He still living in whose name we find
Pretexts to sever, how had he combined?
How the vague fears that flit through common air
Would sink confiding in his watchful care?
How the witch Discord, muttering o'er his grave,
Would fly before his standard!—All most brave
In his mix'd nature seem'd to life to start
When England's honour roused his English heart,
And all most cautious in his English sense,
When England's safety needed sage defence.
Earth holds him not! What doth his shade demand?
Death to each hate, that stabs the Fatherland.
Unite, unite, all ye whose interests lie
In wider lists than "Printed Votes" supply—
Than the small issues of the glorious night,
When Noes to left outnumber Ayes to right,

And State departments see a change—of face,
And Noodle sits in what was Doodle's place.

Still in the Senate, whatsoe'er we lack,
It is not genius;—call old giants back,
And men now living might as tall appear,
Judged by our sons, not us—*we* stand too near.
These I name not—their race is yet to run,
Huzza'd or hooted; my calm task is done.
Ne'er of the living can the living judge—
Too blind the affection, or too fresh the grudge!
My aim was not the libel of the hour,
To snarl at Genius or beslaver Power.
To live is to contest; no angry breath
From this fierce world should pass the gates of Death.
True that our tenets may our judgments guide,
The calmest history has its partial side;
But still such preference robs not him of trust
Whose main design is clearly to be just.
As schools have form'd them, artists mix their hues,
But Art is truth whatever school it choose.

I turn'd one day in musing from the page,*
Where in long order pass from age to age
The shades of Rome's great orators; their claims
On time there only archived; ev'n their names
To us but far-off sounds: yet charms it not
To learn what voices Rome too soon forgot?
And the thought sprung from which this verse has flow'd,
On our own Dead be the same dues bestow'd.

The Author's monument his book; his stone
The Sculptor's. But the Orator whose tone

* Cicero, *De Claris Oratoribus* (Brutus).

Raised up wall'd cities like Amphion's lute,
Stay'd the strong current, struck the wild winds mute,
Like bland Calliope's melodious son,
Leaves no memorial when his race is run.
As on the sands his mind impress'd a day,
As by the tides wash'd with the next away;
The words themselves, you cry, are not effaced,
By faithful Hansard talbotyped or traced.
But what the words themselves without the sound?
The reader yawns, the listener was spell-bound.
You close the book, you question those who heard.
Straight your eye kindles, and your pulse is stirr'd.
Describe the spokesman!—one brief outline teaches
More than yon row of Sepulchres for Speeches.

Be mine to save from what traditions glean,
Or age remembers, or ourselves have seen;
The scatter'd relics care can yet collect,
And fix such shadows as these rhymes reflect;
Types of the elements whose glorious strife
Form'd this free England, and still guards her life.

THE

LOST TALES OF MILETUS.

PREFACE.

TIME has spared no remains, in their original form, of those famous Tales of Miletus, which are generally considered to be the remote progenitors of the modern Novel. The strongest presumption in favour of their merit rests on the evidence of the popularity they enjoyed both among Greeks and Romans in times when the imaginative literature of either people was at its highest point of cultivation. As to the materials which they employed for interest or amusement, we are not without means of reasonable conjecture. Parthenius, a poet, probably of Nicæa (though his birth-place has been called in dispute), who enjoyed a considerable reputation in the Augustan Age, and had the honour to teach Virgil Greek, has bequeathed to us a collection of short love-stories compiled from older and more elaborate legends. In making this collection he could scarcely fail to have had recourse to sources so popular as the fictions of Miletus. Whatever might have been the gifts of Parthenius as a poet, he wastes none of them on his task of compiler. He contents himself with giving the briefest possible outline of stories that were then in popular circulation, carefully divesting them of any ornament of fancy or elegance of style. His work, dedicated to the Latin poet, Gallus, seems designed to suggest, from the themes illustrated by old tale-tellers, hints to the imitation or invention of later poets. And, indeed, Parthenius himself states that it was for such uses to Gallus

that his book was composed. But what stories, thus reduced to the mere ashes of their pristine form, might have been when they took life and glow from the art of the practised tale-teller, the yet extant and animated romance of "The Golden Ass," by Apuleius, may enable us to guess. For though that romance, as well as the story of the "Ass" by Lucian, is generally supposed to have been borrowed from the earlier work of Lucius of Patra, Apuleius implies that his manner of telling it is agreeable to that of the fictions most in vogue in his time, which were certainly the Milesian Fables, or those which the Sybarites imitated from that original. And if in "The Golden Ass" we may really trace a distinguishable vestige of the manner in which the Milesian tale-tellers diversified and adorned their fables, they must have ranged through a variety of interest little less extensive than that in which the novelists of our day display the versatility of their genius,—embracing lively satire, prodigal fancy, and stirring adventure.

Out of such indications of the character and genius of the lost Milesian Fables, and from the remnants of myth and tale once in popular favour, which may be found, not only in such repertories of ancient legend as those of Apollodorus and Conon, but scattered throughout the Scholiasts or in the pages of Pausanias and Athenæus, I have endeavoured to weave together a few stories that may serve as feeble specimens of the various kinds of subject in which these ancestral tale-tellers may have exercised their faculties of invention. I have selected from Hellenic myths those in which the ground is not pre-occupied, by the great poets of antiquity, in works yet extant; and which, therefore, may not be without the attraction of novelty to the general reader. In this selection I have avoided, of course, any of the more licentious themes, to which, it is to be feared, the

Boccaccios of Miletus sometimes stooped their genius; while I have endeavoured to take subjects which depended for the popularity they once enjoyed on elements congenial to art in every land and age; subjects readily lending themselves to narrative construction or dramatic situation, and capable of that degree of human interest which is essential to the successful employment of all the more fanciful agencies of wonder.

I do not, however, assume the tales herein contained to be told in that primitive form of Milesian fiction of which we can only conjecturally trace the vestige. I have rather sought to place the myths upon which they are founded at that point of view from which they would have appeared to contemporaries of Apuleius in whom the vestige of Milesian fable must be principally explored;—a period during which stories derived from heathen myths passed, in re-narrating, through minds in which what is called the modern sentiment, more or less perceptibly, infused itself. I have no doubt that the lovely story of Cupid and Psyche, which forms the most poetical portion of "The Golden Ass," is of much remoter antiquity than the time of Apuleius; but the modern sentiment which delights in under currents of thought, and does not satisfy itself with modes of art wholly sensuous, prevails in Apuleius's treatment of the story, and could not have been breathed into the fiction by any one who had not imbibed the spirit either of Christianity or of the later Platonists. In regarding, therefore, these fictions as if they were composed not by a contemporary of Sophocles nor even of Ovid, but by a contemporary of Apuleius, or of one of his less gifted successors in the revival or re-adaptation of Greek romance, the author gains this advantage: the main difficulty in the treatment of classic myths by a modern writer, is materially lessened, if not wholly removed: for if the modern senti-

ment sometimes appears in the intimation of truths which underlie all fiction, it ceases to be an anachronism, and is critically appropriate to the period assumed for the composition of the story;—just as the mode in which Apuleius platonises the tale of Cupid and Psyche is proper to the time in which he lived, and the influences to which his imagination was subjected.

I must add a few words as to the form in which these narratives are cast. Although it is clear that the Milesian Tales were for the most part told in prose, yet it appears that Aristides, the most distinguished author of those tales whose name has come down to us, told at least some of his stories in verse. Dunlop, in the "History of Fiction," quotes verses from Ovid which seem to decide that question—

> Junxit Aristides Milesia carmina secum,
> Pulsus Aristides nec tamen urbe sua est.

And the myths I have selected are essentially poetic, and almost necessarily demand that license for fancy to which the employment of rhythm allures the sanction of the reader, while it obtains his more ductile assent to the machinery and illusions of a class of fiction associated in his mind not with novelists, but poets.

I have therefore adopted for the stories contained in this volume, forms of poetic rhythm; and the character of the subjects treated seemed to me favourable for an experiment which I have long cherished a desire to adventure; viz. that of new combinations of blank or rhymeless metre, composed not in lines of arbitrary length and modulation (of which we have a few illustrious examples), but in the regularity and compactness of uniform stanza, constructed upon principles of rhythm very simple in themselves, but which, so far as I am aware, have not been hitherto adopted, at least for narrative purposes. If the metres invented for

the following poems were partially suggested by, they are not imitated from, metres in use among the ancients. They are modes of rhythm in conformity with our own associations of prosodiacal arrangement; humbly following in such attempt, if I may say so, with great reverence, the example set to us by Milton, who in his rhymeless translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha aimed at no imitation of the "dactylic dance" of the Horatian stanza (especially in the first two lines), but rather at such rhythmical combinations as might transfer to a measure wholly English in construction, the elegant terseness of the Latin original. In fact, even if the strophic metres of the ancients could be faithfully rendered into the English language, and with a harmony agreeable to the English ear, we may reasonably doubt if they would be suitable to narrative purposes, since there is, I believe, no instance extant or recorded, in Greek or Roman literature, in which such metres were so employed—except episodically, as Horace treats the story of Europa in the Ode to Galatea. It may be asked why, in departing from the usual mechanism of our rhymeless metre, and acknowledging some obligation to classic rhythm, I did not resort to the forms of hexameter, or alternate hexameter and pentameter; for the adoption of which I might have sheltered myself behind the authority of writers so eminent, whether in the English language or the German. Certainly I do not share in the objections which some critics of no mean rank have made to the adaptation of those measures to modern languages in which it is impossible to preserve the laws of quantity that associations derived from the originals are said, I think erroneously, to demand. For certain kinds of poetry, the hexameter especially seems to me admirably suited when in the hands of a master. The time has not, perhaps, yet come to decide the dispute whether "Evangeline"

would have gained or lost in beauty had it been composed in a different measure, but most men of taste who have read the "Herman and Dorothea" of Goethe will allow, that in any other metre the poem could scarcely have had the same patriarchal charm, and no man of taste who has read the noble translation of that poem by Dr. Whewell will venture to assert that in any other metre the spirit of the original could have been as faithfully preserved. But neither the hexameter nor the alternate hexameter and pentameter would be appropriate to my mode of treating these stories, in which, for the most part, I have sought to bring out dramatic rather than epic or elegiac elements of interest, not without aim at that lyrical brevity and compression of incident and description which is less easily attainable in the metres referred to than in composite measures of shorter compass and more varied cæsura. And for the rest, my object has been, not to attempt that which has been already done far better than I could hope to do it, but rather to suggest new combinations of sound in our native language without inviting any comparison with rhythms in the dead languages, from which hints for measures purely English have, indeed, been borrowed, but of which direct imitation has been carefully shunned.

If I have been somewhat prolix in these preliminary remarks, my excuse must be found in the desire I feel to bespeak candid attention to an experiment novel in conception and form, and therefore liable to many faults which those who would repeat it with more success may readily detect and avoid.

LONDON: *Dec.* 1865.

THE SECRET WAY.

The very striking legend which suggests the following poem is found in Athenæus, book xiii. c. 35. It is there given as a quotation from the "History of Alexander, by Chares of Mitylene." The author adds, that "the story is often told by the barbarians who dwell in Asia, and is exceedingly admired; and they have painted representations of the story in their temples and palaces, and also in their private houses." In constructing the plot of the poem, I have made some variations in incident and *dénouement* from the meagre outlines of the old romance preserved in Athenæus, with a view of heightening the interest which springs from the groundwork of the legend. I should add that the name of the Scythian king's daughter is changed from Odatis, which, for narrative purpose, a little too nearly resembles that of her father, Omartes—to Argiope: a name more Hellenic it is true, but it may be reasonably doubted whether that of Odatis be more genuinely Scythian. For the sake of euphony, the name of the Persian Prince is softened from Zariadres to Zariades. This personage is said by the author whom Athenæus quotes, to have been the brother of Hystaspes, and to have held dominion over the country from above the Caspian Gates to the river Tanais (the modern Don). Assuming that he existed historically, and was the brother of Hystaspes and uncle to Darius I., he would have held the dominions assigned to him, as a satrap under Cambyses, not as an independent sovereign. But in a romance of this kind, it would be hypercritical, indeed, to demand strict historical accuracy. Although the hero of the legend would have been, as described, of purely Persian origin (a royal Achæmenian), and the people subjected to him would not have belonged to Media proper, in the poem he is sometimes called the Mede, and his people Medes, according to an usage sufficiently common among Greek writers when speaking generally of the rulers and people of the great Persian Empire. It may scarcely be worth while to observe that though in subsequent tales where the Hellenic deities are more or less prominently introduced or referred to, their Hellenic names are assigned to them, yet in the passing allusions made in this poem to the God of War or the Goddess of Morning, it was judged more agreeable to the general reader to designate those deities by the familiar names of Mars and Aurora, rather than by the Greek appellations of Ares and Eos.

Omartes, King of the wide plains which, north
Of Tanais, pasture steeds for Scythian Mars,
Forsook the simple ways
And Nomad tents of his unconquered fathers;

And in the fashion of the neighbouring Medes,
Built a great city girt with moat and wall,
And in the midst thereof
A regal palace dwarfing piles in Susa,

With vast foundations rooted into earth,
And crested summits soaring into Heaven,
And gates of triple brass,
Siege-proof as portals welded by the Cyclops.

One day Omartes, in his pride of heart,
Led his High Priest, Teleutias, thro' his halls,
And chilled by frigid looks,
When counting on warm praise, asked—"What is wanting?

"Where is beheld the palace of a king,
So stored with all that doth a king beseem;
The woofs of Phrygian looms,
The gold of Colchis, and the pearls of Ormus,

"Couches of ivory sent from farthest Ind,
Sidonian crystal, and Corinthian bronze,
Egypt's vast symbol gods,
And those imagined into men by Hellas;

"Stored not in tents that tremble to a gale,
But chambers firm-based as the Pyramids,
And breaking into spray.
The surge of Time, as Gades breaks the ocean?"

"Nor thou nor I the worth of these things now
Can judge; we stand too near them," said the sage.
"None till they reach the tomb
Scan with just eye the treasures of the palace.

"But for thy building—as we speak, I feel
Thro' all the crannies pierce an icy wind
More bitter than the blasts
Which howled without the tents of thy rude fathers.

"Thou hast forgot to bid thy masons close
The chinks of stone against Calamity."
The sage inclined his brow,
Shivered, and, parting, round him wrapt his mantle.

The King turned, thoughtful, to a favourite chief,
The rudest champion of the polished change
That fixed the wain-borne homes
Of the wild Scythian, and encamped a city;

"Heard'st thou the Sage, brave Scuthes?" asked the King.
"Yea, the priest deemed thy treasures insecure,
And fain would see them safe
In his own temple:" The King smiled on Scuthes.

Unto this Scythian monarch's nuptial bed
But one fair girl, Argiope, was born:
For whom no earthly throne
Soared from the level of his fond ambition.

To her, indeed, had Aphroditè given
Beauty, that royalty which subjects kings,
Sweet with unconscious charm,
And modest as the youngest of the Graces.

Men blest her when she moved before their eyes
Shame-faced, as blushing to be born so fair,
Mild as that child of gods
Violet-crowned Athens hallowing named "Pity." *

Now, of a sudden, over that bright face
There fell the shadow of some troubled thought,
As cloud, from purest dews
Updrawn, makes sorrowful a star in heaven:

And as a nightingale that having heard
A perfect music from some master's lyre,
Steals into coverts lone,
With her own melodies no more contented,

But haunted by the strain, till then unknown,
Seeks to re-sing it back, herself to charm,
Seeks still and ever fails,
Missing the key-note which unlocks the music,—

So, from her former pastimes in the choir
Of comrade virgins, stole Argiope,
Lone amid summer leaves
Brooding that thought which was her joy and trouble.

The King discerned the change in his fair child,
And questioned oft, yet could not learn the cause;
The sunny bridge between
The lip and heart which childhood builds was broken.

* "In the market-place of the Athenians is an altar of Pity, which divinity, as she is, above all others, beneficent to human life and to the mutability of human affairs, is alone of all the Greeks reverenced by the Athenians."—Pausanias; Attics, c. xvii.

Not more Aurora, stealing into heaven,
Conceals the mystic treasures of the deep
Whence with chaste blush she comes,
Than virgin bosoms guard their earliest secret.

Omartes sought the priest, to whose wise heart
So dear the maiden, he was wont to say
That grains of crackling salt
From her pure hand, upon the altar sprinkled,

Sent up a flame to loftier heights in heaven
Than that which rolled from hecatombs in smoke.
"King," said the musing seer,
"Behold, the woodbine, opening infant blossoms,

"Perfumes the bank whose herbage hems it round,
From its own birthplace drinking in delight;
Later, its instinct stirs;
Fain would it climb—to climb forbidden, creepeth,

"Its lot obeys its yearning to entwine;
Around the oak it weaves a world of flowers;
Or, listless drooping, trails
Dejected tendrils lost mid weed and briar.

"There needs no construing to my parable:
As is the woodbine's, so the woman's life:
Look round the forest kings,
And to the stateliest wed thy royal blossom."

Sharp is a father's pang when comes the hour
In which his love contents his child no more,
And the sweet wonted smile
Fades from his hearthstone to rejoice a stranger's.

But soon from parent love dies thought of self;
Omartes, looking round the Lords of earth,
In young Zariades
Singled the worthiest of his peerless daughter;

Scíón of that illustrious hero-stem,
Which in great Cyrus bore the loftiest flower
Purpled by Orient suns;
Stretched his vast satrapies, engulphing kingdoms,

From tranquil palmgroves fringing Caspian waves,
To the bleak marge of stormy Tanais;
On Scythia bordering thus,
No foe so dread, and no ally so potent.

Perilous boundary-rights by Media claimed
O'er that great stream which, laving Scythian plains,
Europe from Asia guards,
The Persian Prince, in wedding Scythia's daughter,

Might well resign, in pledge of lasting peace.
But ill the project of Omartes pleased
His warlike free-born chiefs,
And ill the wilder tribes of his fierce people;

For Scyth and Mede had long been as those winds
Whose very meeting in itself is storm,
Yet the King's will prevailed,
Confirmed, when wavering, by his trusted Seuthes.

He, the fierce leader of the fiercest horde,
Won from the wild by greed of gain and power,
Stood on the bound between
Man social and man savage, dark and massive:

So rugged was he that men deemed him true,
So secret was he that men deemed him wise,
And he had grown so great,
The throne was lost behind the subject's shadow.

In the advice he whispered to the king
He laid the key-stone of ambitious hope,
This marriage with the Mede
Would leave to heirs remote the Scythian kingdom,

Sow in men's minds vague fears of foreign rule,
Which might, if cultured, spring to armed revolt.
In armed revolt how oft
Kings disappear, and none dare call it murder.

And when a crown falls bloodstained in the dust,
The strong man standing nearest to its fall
Takes it and crowns himself;
And heirs remote are swept from earth as rebels.

Of peace and marriage-rites thus dreamed the king;
Of graves and thrones the traitor; while the fume
From altars, loud with prayer
To speed the Scythian envoys, darkened heaven.

A hardy prince was young Zariades,
Scorning the luxuries of the loose-robed Mede,
Cast in the antique mould
Of men whose teaching thewed the soul of Cyrus.

"To ride, to draw the bow, to speak the truth,
Sufficed to Cyrus," said the prince, when child.
"Astyages knew more"
Answered the Magi—"Yes, and lost his kingdoms."

Yet there was in this prince the eager mind
Which needs must think, and therefore needs must learn;
Natures, whose roots strike deep,
Clear their own way, and win to light in growing.

His that rare beauty which both charms and awes
The popular eye; his the life-gladdening smile;
His the death-dooming frown;
That which he would he could;—men loved and feared him.

Now of a sudden over this grand brow
There fell the gloom of some unquiet thought,
As when the south wind sweeps
Sunshine from Hadria in a noon of summer:

And as a stag, supreme among the herd,
With lifted crest inhaling lusty air,
Smit by a shaft from far,
Deserts his lordly range amidst the pasture,

And thro' dim woodlands with drooped antlers creeps
To the cool marge of rush-grown watersprings;
So from all former sports,
Contest, or converse with once-loved companions,

Stole the young prince thro' unfrequented groves,
To gaze with listless eyes on lonely streams.
All, wondering, marked the change,
None dared to question: he had no fond father.

Now, in the thick of this his altered mood,
Arrived the envoys of the Scythian king,
Reluctant audience found,
And spoke to ears displeased their sovereign's message.

"Omartes greets Zariades the Mede:
Between the realms of both there rolls a river
Inviolate to the Scyth,
Free to no keels but those the Scythian charters:

"Yet have thy subjects outraged oft its waves,
And pirate foray on our northern banks
Ravaged the flocks and herds,
Till Scythian riders ask 'Why sleeps the Ruler?'

"Still, loth to fan the sparks which leap to flame
Reddening the nations, from the breath of kings;
We have not sought thy throne
With tales of injury or appeals to justice;

"But searching in our inmost heart to find
The gentlest bond wherewith to link our realms,
Make Scyth and Mede akin,
By household ties their royal chiefs uniting,

"We strip our crown of its most precious gem,
Proffering to thee our child Argiope:
So let the Median Queen
Be the mild guardian of the Scythian river."

Lifting his brow, replied Zariades:
"Great rivers are the highways of the world:
The Tanais laves my shores;
For those who dwell upon my shores I claim it.

"If pirates land on either side for prey,
My banks grow herdsmen who can guard their herds;
Take, in these words, reply
To all complaints that threaten Median subjects.

"But for the gentler phrase wherewith your king
Stoops to a proffer, yet implies command,
I pray you, in return,
To give such thanks as soften most refusal.

"Thanks are a language kings are born to hear,
But speak not glibly till they near their fall.
To guard his Scythian realm,
On the Mede's throne the Scyth would place his daughter;

"I should deceive him if I said 'Agreed.'
No throne, methinks, hath room for more than one;
Where a Queen's lips decide
Or peace or war, she slays the king her husband.

"Thus thinking, did I wed this Scythian maid,
It were no marriage between Mede and Scyth;
Nor wrong I unseen charms;
Love, we are told, comes like the wind from heaven

"Not at our bidding, but its own free will.
And so depart—and pardon my plain speech.
That which I think I say,
Offending oft-times, but deceiving never."

So he dismissed them, if with churlish words,
With royal presents, and to festal pomps.
But one, by Median law
Nearest his throne, the chief priest of the Magi,

Having heard all with not unprescient fears,
Followed the Prince and urged recall of words
Which, sent from king to king,
Are fraught with dragon seeds, whose growth is armies.

Mute, as if musing in himself, the Prince
Heard the wise counsel to its warning close.
Then, with a gloomy look,
Gazed on the reader of the stars, and answered—

"Leave thou to me that which to me belongs;
My people need the Tanais for their rafts;
Or soon or late that need
Strings the Mede's bow, and mounts the Scythian rider.

"Mage, I would pluck my spirit from the hold
Of a strong phantasy, which, night and day,
Haunts it, unsinews life,
And makes my heart the foe of my own reason.

"Perchance in war the gods ordain my cure;
And courting war, I to myself give peace."
Startled by these wild words,
The Mage, in trust-alluring arts long-practised,

Led on the Prince to unfold their hidden sense;
And having bound the listener by the oath
Mage never broke, to hold
Sacred the trust, the King thus told his trouble.

"Know that each night (thro' three revolving moons)
An image comes before me in a dream;
Ever the same sweet face,
Lovely as that which blest the Carian's slumber.*

* The reader will have the kindness to remember in this and a subsequent allusion by Zariades to Greek legend, that the narrative is supposed to be borrowed from a Milesian tale-teller, who would certainly not have entertained the same scruple as a modern novelist in assigning familiarity with Hellenic myths to a Persian prince.

"Nought mid the dark-eyed daughters of the East,
Nought I have ever seen in waking hours,
Rivals in charm this shape
Which hath no life—unless a dream hath substance.

"But never yet so clearly visible,
Nor with such joy in its celestial smile
Hath come the visitant,
Making a temple of the soul it hallows,

"As in the last night's vision; there it stooped
Over my brow, with tresses that I touched,
With love in bashful eyes,
With breath whose fragrance lingered yet in waking,

"And balmed the morn, as when a dove, that brings
Ambrosia to Olympus, sheds on earth
Drops from a passing wing:
Surely the vision made itself thus living

"To test my boast, that truth so fills this soul
It could not lodge a falsehood ev'n in dream:
Wonderest thou, Magian, now,
Why I refuse to wed the Scythian's daughter?

"And if I thus confide to thee a tale
I would not whisper into ears profane,
'Tis that where reason ends,
Men have no choice between the Gods and Chaos.

"Ye Magi are the readers of the stars,
Versed in the language of the world of dreams:
Wherefore consult thy lore,
And tell me if Earth hold a mortal maiden

"In whom my nightly vision breathes and moves.
If not, make mine such talismans and spells,
As banish from the soul
Dreams that annul its longing for the daylight."

Up to his lofty fire-tower climbed the Mage,
Explored the stars and drew Chaldæan schemes;
Thrid the dark maze of books
Opening on voids beyond the bounds of Nature;

Placed crystal globes in hands of infants pure;
Invoked the demons haunting impious graves;
And all, alas, in vain;
The dream, adjured against itself to witness,

Refused to wander from the gate of horn,
To stars, scrolls, crystals, infants, demons, proof.
Foiled of diviner lore
The Mage resumed his wisdom as a mortal;

And since no Mage can own his science fails,
But where that solves not, still solution finds,
So he resought the King,
Grave-browed as one whose brain holds Truth new-captured:

Saying, "O King, the shape thy dreams have glassed
Is of the Colchian Mother of the Medes;
When, on her dragon car,
From faithless Jason rose sublime Medea,

"Refuge at Athens she with Ægeus found;
To him espoused she bore one hero-son,
Medus, the Sire of Medes;
And if that form no earthly shape resembles

"What marvel? for her beauty witched the world,
Ev'n in an age when woman lured the gods;
Retaining yet dread powers
(For memories die not) of her ancient magic,

"Her spirit lingers in these Orient airs,
And guards the children of her latest love,
Thus, hovering over thee,
She warms thy heart to love in her—those children.

"As in her presence thou didst feel thy soul
Lodged in a temple, so the Queen commands
That thou restore the fanes
And deck the altars where her Medus worshipped:

"And in the spirit-breath which balmed the morn
Is symbolized the incense on our shrines,
Which, as thou renderest here,
Shall waft thee after death to the Immortals.

"Seek, then, no talisman against the dream,
Obey its mandates, and return its love;
So shall thy reign be blest,
And in Zariades revive a Medus."

"Friend," sighed the King, "albeit I needs must own
All dreams mean temples, where a Mage explains,
Yet when a young man dreams
Of decking altars, 'tis not for Medea."

He said and turned to lose himself in groves,
Shunning the sun. In wrath against the stars
The Mage resought his tower.
And that same day went back the Scythian envoys.

But from the night which closed upon that day,
The image of the dream began to fade,
Fainter and paler seen,
With saddened face and outlines veiled in vapour;

At last it vanished as a lingering star
Fades on Cithæron from a Mœnad's eyes,
Mid cymbal, fife, and horn,
When sunrise flashes on the Car of Panthers.

As the dream fled, broke war upon the land:
The Scythian hosts had crossed the Tanais.
And, where the dreamer dreamed,
An angry King surveyed his Asian armies.

Who first in fault, the Scythian or the Mede,
Who first broke compact, or transgressed a bound,
Historic scrolls dispute
As Scyth or Mede interprets dreams in story.

Enough for war when two brave nations touch,
With rancour simmering in the hearts of kings;
War is the child of cloud
Oftentimes stillest just before the thunder.

The armies met in that vast plain whereon
The Chaldee, meting out the earth, became
The scholar of the stars,—
A tombless plain, yet has it buried empires.

At first the Scythian horsemen, right to left,
Broke wings by native Medes outstretched for flight,
But in the central host
Stood Persia's sons, the mountain race of Cyrus;

And in their midst, erect in golden car
With looks of scorn, Zariades the King;
And at his trumpet voice
Steed felt as man that now began the battle.

"Up, sons of Persia, Median women fly;
And leave the field to us whom gods made men:
The Scythian chases well
Yon timorous deer; now let him front the lions."

He spoke, and light-touched by his charioteer
Rushed his white steeds down the quick-parted lines;
The parted lines quick-closed,
Following that car as after lightning follow

The hail and whirlwind of collected storm:
The Scyths had scattered their own force in chase,
As torrents split in rills
The giant waves whose gathered might were deluge;

And, as the Scythian strength is in the charge
Of its fierce riders, so that charge, misspent,
Left weak the ignobler ranks,
Fighting on foot; alert in raid or skirmish,

And skilled in weapons striking foes from far,
But all untaught to front with levelled spears,
And rampart-line of shields,
The serried onslaught of converging battle:

Wavering, recoiling, turning oft, they fled;
Omartes was not with them to uphold;
Foremost himself had rode
Heading the charge by which the Medes were scattered;

And when, believing victory won, he turned
His bloody reins back to the central war,
Behold,—a cloud of dust,
And thro' the cloud the ruins of an army!

At sunset, sole king on that plain, reigned Death.
Far off, the dust-cloud rolled; far off, behind
A dust-cloud followed fast;
The hunted and the hunter, Flight and Havoc.

With the scant remnant of his mighty host
(Many who 'scaped the foe forsook their chief
For plains more safe than walls,)
The Scythian King repassed his brazen portals.

In haste he sent to gather fresh recruits
Among the fiercest tribes his fathers ruled,
They whom a woman led
When to her feet they tossed the head of Cyrus.

And the tribes answered—"Let the Scythian King
Return repentant to old Scythian ways,
And laugh with us at foes.
Wains know no sieges—Freedom moves her cities."

Soon came the Victor with his Persian guards,
And all the rallied vengeance of his Medes;
One night, sprang up dread camps
With lurid watch-lights circling doomèd ramparts,

As hunters round the wild beasts in their lair
Marked for the javelin, wind a belt of fire.
Omartes scanned his walls
And said, "Ten years Troy baffled Agamemnon."

Yet pile up walls, out-topping Babylon,
Manned foot by foot with sleepless sentinels,
And to and fro will pass,
Free as the air thro' keyholes, Love and Treason.

Be elsewhere told the horrors of that siege,
The desperate sally, slaughter, and repulse;
Repelled in turn the foe,
With Titan ladders scaling cloud-capt bulwarks,

Hurled back and buried under rocks heaved down
By wrathful hands from scatheless battlements.
With words of holy charm,
Soothing despair and leaving resignation,

Mild thro' the city moved Argiope,
Pale with a sorrow too divine for fear;
And when, at morn and eve,
She bowed her meek head to her father's blessing,

Omartes felt as if the righteous gods
Could doom no altars at whose foot she prayed.
Only, when all alone,
Stole from her lips a murmur like complaint,

Shaped in these words, "Wert thou, then, but a dream?
Or shall I see thee in the Happy Fields?"
Now came with stony eye
The livid vanquisher of cities, Famine;

And moved to pity now, the Persian sent
Heralds with proffered peace on terms that seem
Gentle to Asian kings,
And unendurable to Europe's Freemen;

I from thy city will withdraw my hosts,
And leave thy people to their chiefs and laws,
Taking from all thy realm
Nought save the river, which I make my border,

"If but, in homage to my sovereign throne,
Thou pay this petty tribute once a year;
Six grains of Scythian soil,
One urn of water spared from Scythian fountains."

And the Scyth answered—"Let the Mede demand
That which is mine to give, or gold or life;
The water and the soil
Are, every grain and every drop, my country's:

"And no man hath a country where a King
Pays tribute to another for his crown."
And at this stern reply,
The Persian doomed to fire and sword the city.

Omartes stood within his palace hall,
And by his side Telutias, the high priest.
"And rightly," said the King,
"Did thy prophetic mind rebuke vain-glory.

"Lend me thy mantle now; I feel the wind
Pierce through the crannies of the thick-ribbed stone."
"No wind lasts long," replied,
With soothing voice, the hierarch. "Calm and tempest

"Follow each other in the outward world,
And joy and sorrow in the heart of man:
Wherefore take comfort now,
The earth and water of the Scyth are grateful,

"And as thou hast, inviolate to the Scyth,
His country saved, that country yet to thee
Stretches out chainless arms,
And for these walls gives plains that mock besiegers,

"Traversed by no invader save the storm,
Nor girt by watchfires nearer than the stars.
Beneath these regal halls
Know that there lies a road which leads to safety.

"For, not unprescient of the present ills,
When rose thy towers, the neighbours of the cloud,
I, like the mole, beneath,
Work'd path secure against cloud-riving thunder.

"Employing Æthiops skilled not in our tongue,
Held day and night in the dark pass they hewed;
And the work done, sent home:
So the dumb earthworm shares alone the secret.

"Lo, upon one side ends the unguessed road.
There,—its door panelled in yon far recess,
Where, on great days of state,
Oft has thy throne been set beneath the purple;

"The outward issue opes beyond the camp,
'Mid funeral earth-mounds,* skirting widths of plain,
Where graze the fleetest steeds,
And rove the bravest riders Scythia nurtures,

* The numerous earth-mounds or tumuli found in the steppes now peopled by the Cossacks of the Don are generally supposed to be the memorials of an extinct race akin to, if not identical with, the ancient Scythian.

"They whom thou ne'er could'st lure to walls of stone,
Nor rouse to war, save for their own free soil.
These gained, defy the foe;
Let him pursue and space itself engulphs him."

Omartes answered—"With the towers I built
Must I, O kind adviser, stand or fall.
Kings are not merely men—
Epochs their lives, their actions the world's story.

"I sought to wean my people from the wild,
To centre scattered valours, wasted thoughts,
Into one mind, a State;
Failing in this, my life as king has perished;

"And as mere man I should disdain to live.
Deemest thou now I could go back content
A Scyth among the Scyths?
I am no eaglet—I have borne the ægis.

"But life, as life, suffices youth for joy.
Young plants win sunbeams, shift them as we may.
So to the Nomad tribes
Lead thou their Queen.—O save, ye gods, my daughter!"

The king's proud head bowed o'er the hierarch's breast.
"Not unto me confide that precious charge,"
Replied the sweet-voiced seer;
"Thou hast a choice of flight, I none. Thou choosest

"To stand or fall, as stand or fall thy towers;
Priests may not choose; they stand or fall by shrines.
Thus stand we both, or fall,
Thou by the throne, and I beside the altar.

"But to thy child, ev'n in this funeral hour,
Give the sole lawful guardian failing thee;
Let her free will elect
From thy brave warriors him her heart most leans to;

"And pass with him along the secret way,
To lengthen yet the line of Scythian Kings.
Meanwhile, since needs must be
We trust to others this long-guarded secret,

"Choose one to whom I may impart the clue
Of the dark labyrinth; for a guide it needs;
Be he in war well tried,
And of high mark among the Nomad riders;

"Such as may say unto the antique tribes
With voice of one reared up among themselves,
'From walls of stone I bring
Your King's child to your tents; let Scythia guard her.'"

"Well do thy counsels please me," said the King.
"I will convene to such penurious feast
As stint permits, the chiefs
Worthiest to be the sires of warlike monarchs:

"And, following ancient custom with the Scyths,
He unto whom my daughter, with free choice,
The wine-cup brimming gives,
Shall take my blessing and go hence her husband.

"But since, for guide and leader of the few
That for such service are most keen and apt,
The man in war most tried,
And with the Nomad most esteemed, is Scuthes,

"Him to thy skilled instructions and full trust
Will I send straight. Meanwhile go seek my child,
And, as to her all thought
Of her own safety in mine hour of peril

"Will in itself be hateful, use the force
That dwells on sacred lips with blandest art;
Say that her presence here
Palsies mine arm and dulls my brain with terror;

"That mine own safety I consult in hers,
And let her hopeful think, that, tho' we part,
The same road opes for both;
And if walls fail me, hers will be my refuge."

Omartes spoke, and of his stalwart chiefs
Selecting all the bravest yet unwived,
He bade them to his board
The following night, on matters of grave import

To Seuthes then the secret he disclosed,
And Seuthes sought the hierarch, conned the clue,
And thrid the darksome maze
To either issue, sepulchre and palace;

And thus instructed, treasure, town, and king
Thus in his hands for bargain with the foe,
The treason schemed of yore,
Foiled when the Mede rejected Scythian nuptials,

Yet oft revolved—as some pale hope deferred,
Seen indistinct in rearward depths of time—
Flashed as, when looked for least,
Thro' the rent cloud of battle flashes triumph.

And, reasoning with himself, "the Mede," he said,
"Recks not who sits upon the Scythian throne,
So that the ruler pay
Grains of waste soil and drops of useless water:

"And if I render up an easy prey
The senseless king refusing terms so mild,
For such great service done
And for my rank among the Scythian riders,

"The Mede would deem no man so fit as I
To fill the throne, whose heir he scorned as wife,
And yield him dust and drops,
Holding the realms and treasures of Omartes."

So, when the next day's sun began to slope,
The traitor stood before Zariades,
Gaining the hostile camp
From the mute grave-mound of his Scythian fathers.

Plain as his simplest soldier's was the tent
Wherein the lord of half the Orient sate,
Alone in anxious thought,
Intent on new device to quicken conquest.

But for the single sapphire in his helm,
And near his hand the regal silver urn,
Filled with the sparkling lymph,
Which, whatsoe'er the distance, pure Choaspes

Sends to the lips of Achæmenian kings,*
The Asian ruler might to Spartan eyes
Have seemed the hardy type
Of Europe's manhood crowned in Lacedæmon.

* The license of romantic fable, which has already elevated Zariades from

The traitor, sure of welcome, told his tale,
Proffered the treason and implied the terms.
Then spoke Zariades;
"Know that all kings regard as foe in common

"The man who is a traitor to his king.
'Tis true that I thy treason must accept.
I owe it to my hosts
To scorn no means, destroying their destroyer—

"But I will place no traitor on a throne.
Yet, since thy treason saves me many lives,
I for their sake spare thine:
And since thy deed degrades thee from the foeman,

"I add to life what slaves most covet—gold:
Thy service done, seek lands where gold is king;
And, tho' thyself a slave,
Buy freemen vile eno' to call thee master.

"But if thy promise fail, thy word ensnare,
Thy guidance blunder, by thy side stalks death.
Death does not scare the man
Who, like thyself, has looked on it in battle;

"But death in battle has a warrior's grave;
A traitor dead—the vultures and the dogs."
Then to close guard the King
Consigned the Scyth, who for the first time trembled;

the rank of satrap to that of a sovereign prince, here assigns to him, as an Achæmenian, a share in the sacred waters of Choaspes, which were transmitted exclusively to the head of that family, viz. the Persian King.

And called in haste, and armed his Sacred Band,
The Persian flower of all his Orient hosts;
And soon in that dark pass
Marched war, led under rampired walls by treason.

Safe thro' the fatal maze the Persians reached
Stairs winding upward into palace halls.
With stealthy hand the guide
Pressed on the spring of the concealèd portal,

And slowly opening, peered within: the space
Stood void; for so it had been planned, that none
Might, when the hour arrived,
Obstruct the spot at which escape should vanish:

But farther on, voices were heard confused,
And lights shone faintly thro' the chinks of doors,
Where one less spacious hall
Led, also void, to that of fated banquet.

Curious, and yielding to his own bold heart,
As line on line came, steel-clad, from the wall,
Flooding funereal floors,
The young King whispered, "Here await my signal,"

And stole along the intervening space,
At whose far end, curtains of Lydian woof,
Between vast columns drawn,
Fell in thick folds, at either end disparting:

He looked within, unseen; all eyes were turned
Towards a pale front, just risen o'er the guests,
In which the Persian knew
His brother King; it was not pale in battle.

And thus Omartes spoke:—"Captains and sons
Of the same mother, Scythia, to this feast,
Which in such straits of want
Needs strong excuse, not idly are ye summoned.

"Wishing the line of kings from which I spring
Yet to extend, perchance, to happier times,
And save mine only child
From death, or, worse than death, the Median
bondage,

"I would this night betroth her as a bride
To him amongst you whom herself shall choose;
And the benignant gods
Have, thro' the wisdom of their sacred augur,

"Shown me the means which may elude the foe,
And lead the two that in themselves unite
The valour and the sway
Of Scythia, where her plains defy besiegers.

"If the gods bless the escape they thus permit,
Braved first, as fitting, by a child of kings,
Then the same means will free
Flight for all those who give to siege its terror;

"Women and infants, wounded men and old,
If few by few, yet night by night sent forth,
Will leave no pang in death
To those reserved to join the souls of heroes."

As, in the hush of eve, a sudden wind
Thrills thro' a grove and bows the crest of pines,
So crept a murmured hum
Thro' the grave banquet, and plumed heads bent
downward:

Till hushed each whisper, and upraised each eye,
As from a door behind the royal dais
Into the conclave came
The priest Teleutias leading the King's daughter.

"Lift up thy veil, my child, Argiope,"
Omartes said. "And look around the board,
And from yon beakers fill
The cup I kiss as in thy hand I place it.

"And whosoever from that hand receives
The cup, shall be thy husband and my son."
The virgin raised her veil;
Shone on the hall the starlight of her beauty.

But to no face amid the breathless guests
Turned downcast lids from which the tears dropped slow:
Passive she took the cup,
With passive step led by the whispering augur

Where, blazing lustre back upon the lamps,
Stood golden beakers under purple pall.
"Courage," said low the priest,
"So may the gods, for thy sake, save thy father!"

She shivered as he spoke, but, lips firm-prest
Imprisoning all the anguish at her heart,
She filled the fatal cup,
Raised her sad eyes, and vaguely gazed around her.

Sudden those eyes took light and joy and soul,
Sudden from neck to temples flushed the rose,
And with quick, gliding steps,
And the strange looks of one who walks in slumber,

She passed along the floors, and stooped above
A form, that, as she neared, with arms outstretched,
On bended knees sunk down
And took the wine-cup with a hand that trembled:

A form of youth—and nobly beautiful
As Dorian models for Ionian gods.
"Again!" it murmured low,
"O dream, at last! at last! how I have missed thee!"

And she replied, "The gods are merciful,
Keeping me true to thee when I despaired."
But now rose every guest,
Rose every voice in anger and in terror;

For lo, the kneeler lifted over all
The front of him their best had fled before—
"Zariades the Mede!"
Rang from each lip: from each sheath flashed the sabre,

Thrice stamped the Persian's foot: to the first sound
Ten thousand bucklers echoed back a clang;
The next, and the huge walls
Shook with the war-shout of ten thousand voices

The third, and as between divided cloud
Flames fierce with deathful pest an angry sun,
The folds, flung rudely back,
Disclosed behind one glare of serried armour.

On either side, the Persian or the Scyth,
The single lord of life and death to both,
Stayed, by a look, vain strife;
And passing onward amid swords uplifted,

A girl's slight form beside him his sole guard,
He paused before the footstool of the King,
And in such tones as soothe
The wrath of injured fathers, said submissive—

"I have been guilty to the gods and thee
Of man's most sinful sin,—ingratitude;
That which I pined for most
Seen as a dream, my waking life rejected;

"Now on my knees that blessing I implore.
Give me thy daughter; but a son receive,
And blend them both in one
As the mild guardian of the Scythian River."

DEATH AND SISYPHUS.

The final sentence of Sisyphus, to whom, whatever his misdeeds, even his worst enemies, the mythologists, conceded the merit of founding Ephyra, afterwards Corinth, and ranking high among the earliest encouragers of navigation and commerce, has been made by great poets more familiar to the general reader than the romantic adventures of his mythical life—among which not the least curious are those with Death and Pluto. The special offence which induced Zeus to send Death express to Sisyphus is variously stated by mythologists, though they generally agree that it was that of rashly intermeddling with Divine secrets. According to some authorities, Ares takes that part in the liberation of Death which is here assigned to Pluto. And for a more expeditious detection and punishment of the offence committed by Sisyphus in the capture of our common enemy (or friend, as the case may be), I may refer to the Scholiast on Pindar, Olymp. i. 97. But every antient Greek writer of fiction allowed himself a considerable latitude in his version of National Myths: and a Milesian tale-teller would not, in that respect, have been more scrupulous than an Athenian tragic poet. The effect on religious worship which is herein ascribed to the capture of Death, is partially imitated from the "Plutus" of Aristophanes. There, Zeus loses his votaries when the god of riches recovers his sight; here,—but it is not my business to tell my story beforehand.

ONE day upon his throne of judgment, Zeus
Sate to hear Man accuse his fellow-man;
And to the throne arose one choral cry,
"Zeus, help from Sisyphus!"

Thought the All-wise, "So many against one
Are ill-advised to call on Zeus for help;
Brute force is many—Mind is always one:
And Zeus should side with Mind."

But, deigning to unravel thread by thread
The entangled skeins of self-concealing prayer,
At each complaint his lips ambrosial smiled,
For each was of the craft

Wherein this thief usurped the rights of thieves,
With brain of fox, defrauding maw of wolf,
So that the wolves howled "Help from Sisyphus:
Zeus, give us back our lambs!"

Curious to look upon this knave of knaves,
Zeus darted down one soul-detecting ray
Under the brow which, in repose, sustains,
In movement moves, the All.

Just at that moment the unlucky wretch
Was plotting schemes to cozen Zeus himself,
And, having herds of oxen on his hands
Stol'n from his next of kin,

Fain would he bribe the Thunderer's oracle
To threat a year of famine to the land,
Trebling to all who did not wish to starve
The market price of beeves.

"Softly," said Zeus, "Thy wit ensnares thyself,
Thou deal'st with Man when thou dost steal his ox;
But for an oracle to sell the beef,
Thy dealing is with Zeus."

The Thunderer summoned Hermes. "Go," he said,
"Bid Death deliver to thy hands for Styx
And before sunset, or I may relent,
That rogue—with laughing eyes."

Now, having cheaply bought his oracle,
Home to his supper blithe went Sisyphus:
And as he sate, flower-crowned and quaffing wine,
Death stalked into the hall—

Saying, not "Save thee," as the vulgar say,
But in politer phrase, "I kiss thy hands."
"Art thou the Famine I have bought to-day?"
Cried Sisyphus, aghast;

"Thy bones, indeed, are much in need of beef."
"As lean as I the fattest man would be,
Worked he as hard, kept ever on the trot;
Drain thy last cup—I'm Death!"

"Art thou indeed that slandered friend of Man?
So great an honour was not in my hopes;
Sit down, I pray—one moment rest thy bones;
Here, take this chair, good Death!"

The grisly visitor felt inly pleased
At such unwonted invitation kind;
And saying, "Well, one moment," blandly sate
His os coccygis down.

Myths say that chair was by the Cyclops made;
But, seeking here historic sober truth,
All I know is, that when our crafty Thief
Sought to ensnare a foe,

Or force a creditor to cancel debt,
It was his wont to ask the wretch to sup,
And place him, with warm greeting and sweet smile,
On that nefarious chair;

Out from the back of which, as Death sate down,
Darted a hundred ligaments of steel,
Pierced thro' the hollows of his fleshless bones,
And bound him coil on coil!

"Ho! I am ready now," quoth Sisyphus,
"Up and away!" Death could not stir an inch;
He raged, he prayed, he threatened and he coaxed;
And the thief drank his health;

Saying, "Dear guest, compose thyself; reflect,
'Tis not so pleasant, thou thyself didst own,
To be for ever trotting up and down,
Dabbling thy feet in gore;

"Floundering in stormy seas; inhaling plague;
Kidnapping infancy; slow-poisoning age;
Greeted with tears and groans; abhorred by all;
Sole labourer without fee;

"Sole robber, without profit in the spoil;
Sole killer, without motive in the deed;
Surely it is better to be loved than loathed;
Wouldst thou be loved? Sit still.

"Sit and grow fat. What is it unto thee
If mortals cease to colonise the Styx?
Thou hast no grudge against them: Good or bad,
'Tis all the same to Death."

The Spectre soothed by these well-reasoned words,
And feeling really livelier in repose,
Little by little humanised himself,
And grinned upon his host,

Who, in his craft, deeming it best to make
Friends with a prisoner who might yet get free,
Did all he could to entertain the guest
With many a merry tale

And jocund song and flattering compliment,
Coaxed him to eat, and gave him the tit-bits,
And made him drink, nor grudged the choicest wine,
And crowned his skull with flowers.

Night after night a cheerful sight it was
To see these two at feast, each facing each,
Chatting till dawn under amazèd stars,
Boon comrades, Man and Death.

Meanwhile some private business of his own,
Whereof the Initiate in the Mysteries know
I am forbid to blab to vulgar ears,
Absorbed the cares of Zeus:

Veiled in opaque Olympus, this low earth
The Cloud-compeller from his thoughts dismissed,
Till, throned again upon his judgment-seat,
Downward he bent his ear,

And not a single voice from Man arose,
No prayer, no accusation, no complaint,
As if, between the mortals and the gods,
Fate's golden chain had snapt.

"Is it since Death rid earth of Sisyphus,
That men have grown contented with their lot,
And trouble me no more?" the Thunderer said;
"Hermes, go down and see."

The winged Caducean answered, "Sire of Gods,
Death has not rid the earth of Sisyphus,
But Sisyphus has rid the earth of Death,
And keeps him safely caged.

"Since then, these mortals, fearing Death no more,
Live like the brutes, who never say a prayer,
Nor dress an altar, nor invoke a god;
All temples are shut up;

"Thy priests would die of hunger, could they die;
As 'tis, they are thinner than Tithonus was
Before he faded into air—compelled
To feed on herbs, like slugs.

"But Death has now got flesh upon his bones,
And roses on his cheek, like Ganymede;
Contented with his rest, he eats and sleeps;
And Sisyphus cheats on.

"All men submit to him who captures Death,
And who, did they offend, might set him free."
In his vast mind's abyss the Thunderer mused;
Then, pitying, smiled, and said,

"Alas, for men, if Death has this repose,
I could not smite them with a direr curse
Than their own wishes—evil without end,
And sorrow without prayer.

"Think they, poor fools, in worshipping no more,
That 'tis the gods who stand in need of men;
To men the first necessity is gods;
And if the gods were not,

"Man would invent them, tho' they godded stones.
But in compassion for this race of clay,
Who else would make an Erebus of earth,
Death must be freed, and straight.

"Seek thou our brother Pluto: Death, of right,
Is in his service, and at his command;
And let the King of Shadows, with all speed,
Re-ope the way to Styx."

Down thro' the upper air into the realms
Of ancient Night dropped soundless, as a star,
Startling lost sailors, falls on Boreal seas,
The heavenly Messenger.

He found the King of Hades half asleep;
Beside him, yawned black-robed Persephonè;
A dreary dulness drowsed the ghastly court,
And hush'd the hell-dog's bark.

"Ho, up! Aidoneus," cried the lithesome god.
Touching the Dread One with his golden wand.
"Welcome," said Pluto, slowly roused. "What news?
Is earth sponged out of space?

"Or are men made immortals? Days and weeks
Here have I sat, and not a ghost has come
With tales of tidings from a livelier world.
What has become of Death?"

"Well may'st thou ask?" said Hermes, and in brief
He told his tale, and spoke the will of Zeus.
Then rose the Laughterless, with angry frown
Shadowing the realm of shade,

And donned the helm wherewith, on entering light,
From light he hides the horror of his shape.
Void stood hell's throne, from hell's gate rose a blast,
And upon earth came storm.

Ships rocked on whitening waves; the seamen laughed;
"Death is bound fast," they cried; "no wave can drown."
Red lightnings wrapt the felon plundering shrines,
And smote the cradled babe:

"Blaze on," the felon said; "ye cannot kill."
The mother left the cradle with a smile;
"A pretty toy," quoth she, "the Thunderer's bolt!
My urchin plays with it.

"Brats do not need a mother; there's no Death."
The adulteress starting cried, "Forgive me, Zeus!"
"Tut," quoth the gallant, "let the storm rave on.
Kiss me. No Death, No Zeus!"

"Laugh, kiss, sin on; ere night I have ye all,"
Growled the Unseen, whose flight awoke the storm;
And in the hall where Death sate crowned with flowers,
Burst thro' closed doors the blast.

Waiting his host's return to sup, Death sate,
A jolly, rubicund, tun-bellied Death;
Charmed with his chair, despite its springs of steel,
And lilting Bacchic songs.

Suddenly round about him and around
Circled the breath that kindled Phlegethon;
Melted like wax the ligaments of steel;
And Death instinctive rose:

He did not see the Hell-King's horrent shape,
But well he knew the voice at which the hall
Shook to the roots of earth in Tartarus.
"Find I the slave of Life

"In mine own viceroy, Life's supremest lord?
Haste—thy first charge, thine execrable host:—
Then long arrears pay up; career the storm,
And seize, and seize, and seize!

"Bring me the sailor chuckling in his ship,
The babe whose cradle knows no mother's knee,
The adulterer in the riot of his kiss,
And say, 'Zeus reigns and Death.'

"And seize, and seize, and seize, for Hell cries 'Give;'"
So the voice went receding down the storm;
And Sisyphus then entering in the hall,
Death clutched him by the throat.

"How cam'st thou free?" gasped out the thief of thieves:
"My chains were molten at the breath of Dis.
Quick; I have much to do." Said Sisyphus,
"I see mine hour is come;

"But as I've been a kindly host to thee,
So, by the memory of boon comradeship,
Let me at least unto my wife bequeath
My last requests on earth:

"Ho, sweetheart!" Death still had him in his gripe;
But, not unwilling that his host should save
His soul from torture by some pious wish,
Paused—and the wife came in.

"Hark ye, dear love," unto her ear the thief
Whisperingly stole his dying words from Death:
"As, whatsoe'er to others my misdeeds,
I have been true to thee,

"The sweetest, gentlest, loveliest of thy sex,
Obey me now, as I have thee obeyed;
I know, by warning message from the gods,
That for a time my soul

"Must quit my body; Zeus needs my advice.
But tho' to vulgar eyes I may seem dead,
Hold me as living; take me to my couch;
Wrap me up warmly, sweet:

"Death is set free; slay a fat capon, love,
Place with a bowl of Chian by my bed.
Stay, chuck, those armlets, pearls from Ormus—chuck,
When I come back, are thine."

As all wise knaves make sure of honest wives,
So the good woman, swearing to obey,
Sisyphus trusted to her love—of pearls,
And left the hall with Death.

Death straightway gave to Hermes at the door
His charge, and passed away upon the storm;
On sea rose yells, soon drowned beneath the waves,
On land rose shrieks, soon stilled;

And the next morning all the altars smoked,
And all the fanes were carpeted with knees:
Death had returned to earth; again to heaven
The gods returned for men.

Meanwhile adown the infinite descent
The god of thieves conducted the arch-thief,
Who prayed his patron deity to explain
Why in his noon of years

Thus hurried off to everlasting night.
"Hadst thou," said Hermes, "only cheated knaves
Worse than thyself in being also fools,
Thou might'st have lived as long

"As that yet blacker thief, the solemn crow;
But 'tis too much to cheat the Sire of Gods,
And forge his oracles to sell the beef
Thou hadst the wit to steal."

"True," sighed the ghost; "let me but live again,
And Zeus shall have no overseer on earth
So sternly holding venal priests in awe
Of a strict watch as I.

"Not for myself I speak; I think of Zeus.
'Tis for his interest that a knave like me
Should be converted to a holy man;
Marvels attest the gods."

"Sound truth," said Hermes; "but, like other truths,
Before its profits the discoverer dies.
'Tis now too late for such kind hints to Zeus."
"Not if thou plead my cause.

"Is not Zeus mild to sinners who repent?"
"Yes, on condition they are still alive."
"Were I then living, thou wouldst plead for me?"
"Ay; nor, methinks, in vain."

"That's all I ask. If I escape the Shades,
And in my body lodge myself again,
(There's honour among thieves,) I count on thee"—
"Escape the Shades and count."

"One doubt disturbs me still," resumed the ghost.
"The gods have their distractions, Death has none.
Before thou hear me, or canst plead with Zeus,
Death will be at my heels."

"Friend," said more gravely the good-humoured god.
"Dost thou, in truth, nurse crotchets of return
From the inexorable domain? Tut, tut,
Dead once is dead for good!"

"Now, then, I know thou really art my friend:
None but true friends choose such unpleasant words,"
Replied the ghost, "Crotchet or not, I mean
To sup at home to-night."

"If so," said Hermes, "having supped, and proved
Thou hast once more a stomach in the flesh,
Call Hermes thrice; ere Death can find thee out,
I'll plead thy cause with Zeus,

"And let thee know if thou'rt a ghost again!"
"Content!" cried Sisyphus, and grew so gay,
That Hermes, god of wits as well as thieves,
Sighed when they got to Styx;

And inly said, "A rogue like this would make
Souls in Elysium find their bliss less dull:"
Here the rogue whispered to the god, "To-night!"
Then cried to Charon, "Boat!"

"Thy fee!" said Charon. "Where's thine obolus?"
"Obolus, stupidest of ferryman!
Let souls made unctuous by funereal nard
Grease thy Phlegræan palm.

"There is no house-tax where there is no house;
There is no grave-tax where there is no grave.
I am unburied and unburnt; I'm nought,—
Nought goes for nothing, churl."

Charon shoved off in growling "Hang thyself."
"Lend me thy throat," replied the ghost, "I will."
Thereat the ghosts, unburied like himself,
Laughed out a dreary laugh.

Dense was that crowd, the wrong side of the Styx
To and fro flitting; age-long to and fro;
The guileless man murdered in secret ways;
The murderer in his flight,

Back-looking, lest the Furies were behind,
Down sliddery scarp o'ergrown by brambles whirled
Both burialless save in the vulture's craw,
And now from judgment kept

On the slow stream's bleak margin, side by side.
There, cast by shipwreck on untrodden sands,
Where never sailor came, o'er bleaching skulls
To sprinkle pious dust,

Lovers, whose kisses had been meeting fires,
Unsevered still, clasped hands without a throb,
Staring on waves whose oozing dulness gave
No shadow back to shades.

Eft-soons a sound strange to the realms of Dis,
Roll'd o'er the Ninefold River to the hall
Wherein, returned, sate Pluto; loathèd sound
Of laughter mocking woe.

"What daring ghosts by impious mirth profane
The sanctity of Hades?" asked the King.
Answered a Shape that just before the Three
Had brought a conqueror's soul,

"Upon the earthwood margin of the Styx,
Merry as goat-song makes wine-tippling boors,
Shoulder on shoulder pressing, the pale mob
Drink into greedy ears

"The quips and cranks of an unburied droll
Fresh from Greek suns, named Sisyphus. Dread King,
Charon, provoked to mutiny by mirth,
Swears he will break his oars

"Unless thou free him from the ribald wit
Which stings him as the gadfly Io stung."
As Sisyphus, unburied, could not come
To Pluto—Pluto went,

Striding the Ninefold stream, to Sisyphus.
"Cease thy vile mime-tricks," said the Laughterless,
"Or dread the torments doom'd to laughter here."
"Pluto," replied the knave,

"There are no torments, by thy righteous law,
To any ghost until his case be judged;
But to be judged he must have crossed the Styx:
The unburied cannot cross.

"'Tis not my fault, but that of my base wife;
She grudges funeral to the corpse I left.
But if thou let my ghost return to earth,
As ghosts, when wronged, have done;

"To fright her soul its duty to discharge,
And by interment fit me for the Styx,
Most gladly I will face thy Judges three,
And prove my blameless life."

"Go then, nor tarry. Let me not again
Send Death to fetch thee. Frighten well thy wife.'
Swift into upper air sped Sisyphus,
Slid thro' his household doors,

And his own body entered in a trice,
And having settled at his ease therein,
He fell to supper with exceeding gust,
That done, cried "Hermes," thrice,

Having thus cried, sleep fell upon his eyes
And, in the vision of the night, behold,
Stood Hermes aureoled by a ring of light
Shed from the smile of Zeus,

Saying, "The Thunderer hath vouchsafed reprieve,
Nor shall Death take thee till thyself dost call;
And what in life men covet will be thine—
Honours, and feasts, and gear:

"Hold these as perfumes on an altar burned;
The altar stands, the incense fades in smoke;
The Three will ask thee, 'Was the altar pure?'
Not 'Were the perfumes sweet?'"

At morn woke Sisyphus; and of that dream
Recalled the first half, and forgot the last.
"Death shall not come till I myself shall call.
How I shall tire my heirs!

"What! call on Death, 'mid honours, feasts, and gear!
Hermes, indeed thou art the god of thieves;
A famous bargain we have made with Zeus:"
He rose, and hailed the sun.

And all things prospered well with Sisyphus:
Out of the profits of his stolen beeves
He built him ships and traded to far seas,
And every wind brought gold;

And with the gold he hired himself armed men,
And by their aid ruled far and wide as king;
Filled justice-halls with judges incorrupt,
Temples with priests austere:

And from a petty hamlet Corinth rose,
With heaven-kissed towers, above a two-fold sea,
And where gaunt robbers prowled thro' forest glooms,
And herds grazed leagues of waste,

The boor in safety carolled at his plough,
And ample garners hived the golden grain:
Thus each man's interest led to all men's law;
And, born of iron rule,

Order arose to harmonise brute force;
And glimmered on the world the dawn of Greece.
For if the gods permit the bad to thrive,
'Tis for the ends of good,

As tyrants sow the harvest freemen reap.
But Sisyphus built temples and decked shrines,
Not for religious homage to the gods,
But as the forts of thrones.

There was no altar in his secret soul:
If he prized law, law legalises power;
And conquest, commerce, tax, and tribute were
The beeves he stole as king.

So he lived long 'mid honours, feasts, and gear;
But age came on, and anguish, and disease.
Man ever thinks, in bargaining with Zeus,
To cheat, and ever fails.

And weary, weary seemed the languid days,
Joyless the feast, and glitterless the gold,
Till racked with pain, one night on Death he called,
And passed with Death away.

He lacked not, this time, funeral obsequies;
Assyrian perfumes balmed his funeral pyre:
His ashes crumbled in a silver urn,
Stored in a porphyry tomb.

And for a while, because his children reigned,
Men praised his fortunes, nor condemned his sins;
Wise bards but called him "Craftiest of mankind,"
Proud rulers, "The most blest."

But when his line was with the things no more,
And to revile the old race pleased the new,
All his misdeeds rose lifelike from his tomb,
And spoke from living tongues:

And awful legends of some sentence grim,
Passed on his guilty soul in Tartarus,
Floated, like vapours, from the nether deep,
And tinged the sunlit air.

But, by a priest in Saïs, I was told
A tale, not known in Greece, of this man's doom,
That when the Thracian Orpheus, in the Shades,
Sought his Eurydice,

He heard, tho' in the midst of Erebus,
Song sweet as his Muse-mother made his own;
It broke forth from a solitary ghost,
Who, up a vaporous hill,

Heaved a huge stone that came rebounding back,
And still the ghost upheaved it and still sang.
In the brief pause from toil while towards the height
Reluctant rolled the stone,

The Thracian asked in wonder, "Who art thou,
Voiced like Heaven's lark amidst the night of Hell?"
"My name on earth was Sisyphus," replied
The phantom. "In the Shades

"I keep mine earthly wit; I have duped the Three.*
They gave me work for torture; work is joy.
Slaves work in chains, and to the clank they sing."
Said Orpheus, "Slaves still hope!"

* The three judges of Hell are not named in this tale. According to mythological chronology they could not have been those famous arbiters of final doom, Æacus, Rhadamanthus, and Minos, who did not flourish even on earth till after the time of Sisyphus.

"And could I strain to heave up the huge stone
Did I not hope that it would reach the height?
There penance ends, and dawn Elysian fields."
"But if it never reach?"

The Thracian sighed, as looming through the mist
The stone came whirling back. "Fool," said the ghost,
"Then mine, at worst, is everlasting hope."
Again uprose the stone.

CORINNA;

OR, THE GROTTO OF PAN AT EPHESUS.

In the neighbourhood of Ephesus there was a grotto, said to be arched over one of the entrances to Hades. In the grotto there was a statue of Artemis, to which was attached the reed dedicated to her by Pan as a peace-offering. This grotto afforded an ordeal to maidens willing to clear themselves of any charge against their honour. If when they entered the cave the reed gave forth a sound of music, they were considered to be acquitted of all charge—if not, they disappeared. The following story is founded on this legend.

GLAUCON of Lesbos, the son of Euphorion,
Burned for Corinna, the blue-eyed Milesian.
Nor mother nor father had she,
Beauty and wealth had the orphan.

Short was the wooing, and fixed was the wedding-day,
Nuptial dues paid to the Fates and to Artemis: *
But envy not lovers their bliss;
Brief is the bliss of a mortal.

"Wealthy in truth is thy beauteous affianced one,"
Said to the lover his father Euphorion:
"To save thee the shame of her wealth,
Left I my vineyards in Lesbos.

* Previous to any marriage (usually, but not always, on the day before the wedding), it was customary with the Greeks to make offerings to Hera, Artemis, and the Fates, as divinities presiding over marriage.

"More than one Zeus has rained gold on thy Danaë:
Look at these proofs; weigh the names of the witnesses."
All marble stood Glaucon, as one
Smit by the eye of Medusa.

Lone in her chamber, the tender Milesian
Started from dreams of her lover to gaze on him.
And "Dazzling thy home, my betrothed;
Gold frets the beams of thy ceilings;

"Fair shine thy walls with the tissues of Persia;
Ind paves thy floors with its tributes of ivory;
Thy chests teem with Laurian ore;
Art thou not proud of thy riches?"

"All that thou namest," replied the Milesian,
"Passing to thee, are but prized as thou prizest them:
Of wealth that is mine I am proud—
Proud of the heart of my Glaucon!"

"Rightly thou sayest my heart, mocking sorceress,
That I have given to crush and to trample on;
My right hand of man is mine own,
This yet I save from dishonour."

Hurrying he gasped out the tale that had maddened him,
Witness and proof; and she heard and she answered not;
She sate looking drearily down,
As suppliants sit by an altar.

"Speechless?" he cried—"No defence? O thou guilty one."
Then from her white lips her voice sounded hollowly:
"Accusers are many—and I,
Now, losing thee, am so lonely."

Here the voice stopped; and a shudder came over her,
Looking too young, not for grief, but for guiltiness.
The wrath of the man fell abashed;
Inly he sighed, "Yet she loves me!"

"Born-blind are mortals," he said, after pausing long,
"Guessing the colours of truth, as lip-told to them;
But truth is beheld by the gods:
Dar'st thou ask gods for thy judges?

"Pan, the omniscient, a shrine has at Ephesus,
Built in the arch of the entrance to Acheron,
And there the god hung up his reed,
Vowed unto Artemis stainless.

"Let the pure maiden, appealing from calumny,
Enter with holy foot under the gloomy arch,
The reed which no mortal may touch
Sounds silver-sweet her acquittal.

"They who are guilty!" "Why pause? For the guilty, then,
Say, has the reed a voice sterner than memory?"
"The reed for the guilty is mute:
Lost to the guilty is daylight.

"If thou art pure the adventure is perilless,
Horror and night, if the witnesses slander not:
Restored to my arms, living bride,
Or in the ghost-land—a shadow!"

Sudden she rose, all the woman in majesty;
Fearlessly fronting him; solemnly beautiful;
And calm was her eye and her smile,
But the calm thrilled him with terror.

Calmly thus rises the moon over Rhodopè,
Calmly revealing the ice-fields of Thracia,
When everywhere quiet and light,
Everywhere midnight and winter.

"Welcome the shrine in the gateway of Acheron
So that thou art by my side as I enter it;
When rounds the next moon to her full,
Meet we at Ephesus, Glaucon.

"So the gods keep thee!—return to Euphorion."
Veiling her head, as a dream she passed noiselessly,
Passed noiselessly—as when a dream
Glides from the eyelids of sorrow.

Round is the orb of the moon in the summer sky;
Dark in the sacred grove, pine tree and platanus
Commingle the gloom of their boughs
Over the arch of Pan's grotto.

Came from the right with her maids, the Milesian;
Came from the left, the pale son of Euphorion;
Before the dread cavern, the two
Meet, and stand facing each other.

"Nuptial wreaths crown thee: Oh blessèd the omen be!
Shamed lying tongues when the reed vowed to Artemis
Shall lead on the flutes for my bride!"
"Then thou still lov'st me, O Glaucon!

"If I come back from the path into Acheron
Wilt thou yet think of the tales that have tortured thee?
And if I come not, wilt thou say,
'I asked her life, and she gave it?'"

Veiling his face with his hand, spoke the Lesbian,
"Come back to light, and the gods have acquitted thee;
But ah! if the gods could condemn,
There, where thou goest, I follow."

"Now," she said softly, "I fear thee not, Artemis.
Sun, soon to rise from thy sleep in dark ocean,
Whose steeds I have blamed for their sloth,
Waiting the sound of one footfall;

"Flowers in whose leaves I so late had my oracles,
Asking leaf after leaf 'Loves he? much? evermore?'
And deeming it promise from Heaven
When but a leaf answered kindly;

"Take my farewell, if so sentence the deities.
Life has worse terrors than those of the Shadow-land.
Now, Glaucon, thy right hand once more,
Ah, once again say, 'I love thee:'"

"Hold; if thy soul does not cry, 'I am innocent'
Stern will the gods be." "Are mortals more merciful?
If so, wilt thou make me thy bride?"
"Yes; but O be not my victim."

Gently she bent o'er the right hand that clung to her;
Softly a tear and a kiss fell together there;
Then startled he misses her touch,
Blackly the cave has closed o'er her:

Clanged the grim doors with a roar as she glided in;
Voiceless around stood the listening group, tremulous;
And hark, from the heart of the cave
Sound not of Pan's fluten music—

Sound of such wail as to haunted dreams wander from
Lands lost to light, where Cocytus winds drearily,—
O never till earth hide their urns,
They who have heard shall forget it.

Wide flew the doors of the fatal cave, noiselessly,
Into the dark rushed the moonbeams inquisitive;
The moonbeams rushed into the dark,
Rushed with the moonbeams the lover.

White at the verge of the gulf, black and fathomless,
Niched in her shrine, stood the statue of Artemis,
And lo, at her feet lay the reed
Vowed by the Haunter of Forests.

Close by the reed was the girl's wreath of myrtle-buds,
Every bud withered save one, freshly blossoming,
And close to the garland a leaf
Torn from an ivory tablet;

These the sole tokens that told of the vanished one.
Few were the words that were writ on the ivory:
"To Glaucon my wealth on the earth;
With me I take what he gave me."

"Many, since then, say the maiden was innocent,
That her rash love roused the wrath of cold Artemis;
And they who would slanders revive
Only dare hint them in whispers.

Waned not that moon ere to torches funereal
By his son's bier walked the grey-haired Euphorion,
And near the dark cave, Glaucon's tomb
Arched his own path to the shadows.

Now thro' the stone of the tomb cleaves a myrtle tree,
Springing, 'tis said, from the lost maiden's bridal wreath;
Its stem parts in twain; over green
One half, and one ever leafless.

Fondly the green with the leafless would intertwine,
Seeking to deck branches sere with fresh blossomings,
And never again wear a smile
They who sit under that myrtle.

THE FATE OF CALCHAS.

There are at least three traditions as to the fate of Calchas: one of which (Servius ad Virg. Ecl. vi. 72) serves as groundwork to the story herein told.

CALCHAS, the soothsayer of mankind the wisest,
King over kings, subjecting Agamemnon,
Thus counselled to himself
Sitting outside his porch one summer noon;

"Enough, O Calchas, hast thou lived for glory;
Now live, as meaner mortals live, for pleasure;
Albeit thy locks are grey,
Long years yet stretch between the Styx and thee;

"For, by unerring oracle, hath Phœbus
Declared that Calchas shall from death be sacred,
Till he a soothsayer meet
With wisdom more heaven-gifted than his own.

"Now know I all the priests of all the temples;
There breathes not one who hails me not as master.
That sage has to be born,
Who, when as grey as I, may be as wise.

"Wherefore the joys which in life's noon escaped me,
Around life's lengthened evening I will gather,
And amid wine and flowers
Await the slow forewarner of the Shades."

So Calchas with his share of Ilion's treasure
Built a fair house 'mid fields of corn and olive;
But most he took delight
In vines transplanted from the Phrygian hills.

One day he stood, o'er-arched with purple clusters
Ripe for the vintage, when there spoke behind him
A sharp and taunting voice,
"Why counting grapes whose wine is not for thee?"

Sore angered at such rude rebuke irreverent,
The prophet turning, saw a wolf-eyed rover,
Most like some seaman wrecked,
And, gaunt with hunger, prowling alien shores.

"Stranger to me and truth," the wise man answered,
"The grapes are mine, and mine will be the vintage."
"Stranger thyself to truth,"
Replied the vagrant, "thou may'st press the grapes,

"But, as I said, the wine belongs to others."
"Know'st thou, O frontless man, that I am Calchas,
Apollo's awful priest?
Hence, nor with ribald jests profane mine ear."

"It suits not priests another's goods to covet,
And less to rail at him whose tongue speaks truly;
The wine those clusters store,
Shall never redden by a drop thy lips."

"Art thou a soothsayer also?" asked the Prophet.
"Regard my dress and thine: Are soothsayers ragged?
"Thy garb, indeed, shows want,
And thy looks hunger; dost thou fail of work?"

"Nay, I find work enough in yonder city;
But if thou need'st a slave to tend thy vineyards,
I'll sell myself to thee
The day thou drink the vintage of those grapes."

"Agreed! Where find thee?" "Daily in the market,
At best of any man who gives me taskwork."
"Go. When these grapes are wine
I'll summon thee, and thou shalt be my slave."

So the man went his way; and in due season
Red feet, in dancing measure, trod the clusters,
And Calchas set apart
The choicer juices in the bell-mouthed urns,

Stored to fermènt amid Arabian spices,
And languish into draughts for future winters.
But the new must, made clear
By sharpening acids for that autumn feast,

Being now cooled in moist sea-sands, and courting
With infant smiles the lips of the Bacchante,
Calchas sent forth his slaves
To summon round his board a host of friends;

And, mindful of the bond with that rude stranger,
Ordered the slaves to seek him in the market,
And bid him come to quaff
To his new master's health in this new wine.

The guests were met, and ranged on seats of citron,
With ivy crowned and Amathusian myrtle,
When strode into the hall
The ragged vagrant, lean, with hungry eyes.

Then Calchas rising, first made due libation,
And cup in hand, refilled by slaves from Ilion,
Told with a priestly mirth,
Grave, yet provoking gaiety, his tale,

The vagrant's sturdy and unshamed assurance,
And how he proffered slavery proving truthless;
"Yea, on the very day
Whereon," the prophet said, "I drink this wine.

"Therefore, my guests, I call you all to witness
If this man now dare to renew that proffer,
So there be no dispute,
That by his proper choice he is my slave.

"Stranger, thou hearest. Own thyself repentant;
Learn shame, take pardon, and depart a freeman."
The stranger hitched his rags
Over his shoulder with a burly scoff;

"I said that wine thy lips shall never redden;
Say that it shall, and prove both fool and liar;
Drink, and I am thy slave:
If thou drink not, I claim thee, then, as mine."

At the buffoon effrontery of this outcast,
Bearding the priest whose looks had awed Achilles,
Mirth seized on every guest;
With one huge laughter all the banquet pealed:

The Trojan slaves caught the infectious humour,
And first, since Ilion fell, relaxed to laughter;
The carvers dropped the steel,
The players the flute, holding their shaken sides.

As Calchas, striving hard at self-composure,
Lifted the cup, he eyed the unmoved vagrant
  Amid the general mirth
    Grave as, by starlings mocked, Athenè's owl.

And quite unable longer to be solemn,
The seer burst forth in laughter yet more headstrong
  For effort to restrain,
    And as he laughed his face grew purple-flushed;

And his frame rocked; as one who feels an earthquake;
And from his right hand fell, unsipped, the wine-cup;
  And, when all else were hushed,
    Still he laughed on; striving to groan, he laughed:

And as the guests, smit with strange fear, came round
      him,
Gasping and choked, he fell to earth; and touching
  The vagrant's feet, laughed out
    "The greater soothsayer's found!" So Calchas
      died.

THE OREAD'S SON:

A LEGEND OF SICILY.

The beautiful legends which furnish the subject of this story, once so famous that Ovid in his "Metamorphoses" (lib. iv.) considers it too well known to repeat, are told with some variations by different authorities: Diodorus, Ælian, Servius (ad Virg. Ecl.), &c. Parthenius, c. xxix. tells the tale with his usual laconic dryness. It is said to have been the favourite theme of Stesichorus. To the hero of the romance, Daphnis, Sicilian traditions accord the fame due to the inventor of Bucolic poetry.

On lawns and riverbanks in Sicily
Shepherds first heard—I speak of times remote—
A sound of wondrous charm,
Voice nor of man nor bird; we call it Music.

Lured by the sound, the curious rustics tracked
The source it flowed from, thro' the liquid air,
To swards with hyacinths lush,
Where a boy sate alone beneath the ilex,

Breathing a soul into the hollow reed;
Around him grazed flocks white of fleece as those
Which heard Apollo's call
In fields Thessalian trodden by Alcestis.

As near to manhood's beauty was the boy's
As, in the hour when drowsy violets wake,
The pure star of the morn
Nears to the sun ere lost in ampler glory.

Much marvelling, spoke the shepherds to the youth,
Who, at their voice, his fluten music ceased,
And answered soft and low;
But theirs not his, and his was not their language.

So that, divining but by sign his will,
They left him, deeming, in their simple awe,
That, son of some strange prince,
His voice could call armed men if he were angered.

Oft-heard but seldom seen, the alien boy
There lingered, haunting dell, and glade, and rill;
And morn, and noon, and eve,
The breeze of his sweet pipings gladdened heaven.

And, as the presence of the music-breath
Fused its sweet soul into Sicilian air,
A gentler nature moved
Thro' the rude listeners; love, before brute instinct,

Became man's struggle to approach the gods;
And as a god itself, rebuking force,
Demanded dulcet prayers,
Attuned to imitate the alien's music.

Meanwhile, unconscious of his own soft charm,
The stranger piped but to his careless flocks,
And oftimes sighed to think
That he with men had found no speech in common.

One summer noon, as thus he thought, thus sighed
By the cool fount of forest-shadowed waves,
In his own native ongue
The voice of one invincible made answer:

"Why dost thou pine to know the speech of men,
Uttering complaint in language of the gods?
And from what amaranth bowers
Strayest thou lone adown the gloom of forests?"

Startled, he gazed around, and guessed not whence,
From wood, or wave, or air, those accents came;
But as a man gives voice
To his own thought, and, hearing it, replieth,

So he addressed the unseen questioner:
"Who, and whate'er thou art, 'mid races pure,
Which, in this world of man,
Have world their own, whereof they hold the portals,

"Opening or closing as they list,—come forth,
Be my companion in these solitudes,
Enter my void of life,
As in this hollow reed there enters music."

Scarce had he said, when all the fountain stirred,
And from it rose a mist of starry spray,
Arched-o'er with iris hues
Veiling the sun, and with a luminous dimness

Snatching from sight the outward world beyond;
It cleared away; and, lo, beside him sate
An image woman-fair,
Fair less as substance than as dream of beauty.

Her paly locks white water-lilies starred,
Her dewy robes flowed undulous as waves,
And in her smile the light
Shone chill as shines the Hyad through the shower.

Yet in her looks was gentleness serene,
Waking no passion, or of love or fear,
But falling on his soul
Tender as falls the pure kiss of a sister.

And his heart opened to his new-found friend;
She in her new-found friend placed equal trust;
And all that summer noon,
Side by side seated, they exchanged confidings.

Brief told her tale: her race the Water-Nymph's,
Goddess of earth, yet privileged to commune
With powers that dwell in heaven,
Seeking with theirs to assimilate her being,

And be partaker of their tranquil bliss;
Glassing in dreams Selenè's silver calm,
Or with light's soul ensouled,
When flushed by Helios all her wavelets trembled.

"I," said the youth, "am riddle to myself,
And when I would remember, oft I guess.
Under the Hill of Fire,
In a green valley, bowered around with laurels

"That walled it from the world, my childhood passed
Where never winter robbed of leaves a rose.
Forms which no likeness have
To those beheld since I have left that valley,

"Sported around me with strange harmless mirth,
Goat-hoofed, and shaggy-haired, with human faces,
And one of these the lord,
(We called him Pan,) taught me this reed, and
gave it.

"At times there came down from the burning hill
A woman-form, like thine, nymph-beautiful,
Yet more than thine distinct,
Fresh with warm life as the first morn of summer.

"For she was of the Oread's buxom race,
That haunt the hill tops nearest to the sun,
Embrowned with hardy bloom;
Loose oak leaves rippling in her russet tresses.

"And she would fondle me in her strong arms,
And rock to sleep with gusty lullabies,
Like winds that sing to night
Thro' pines and rocky caves. I called her 'Mother.'

"So I grew up, and of this mortal race
Knew nought, save that my mother and the Fauns
Would, when they thought I slept,
Mourn that I was not of themselves, but mortal.

"A child no longer, on the verge of youth,
Six moons agone, I stood amid a glade
Watching the lurid sparks
Shot from the mount of fire beyond the laurels,

"When sudden dropped, as from a passing cloud,
On the green turf, with feet that made no sound,
Fronting me where I stood,
A shape of glory ringed with quivering halo.

"'Fear not,' he said, and from his smile a ray
Lit up the laurels. 'Me thou dost not know;
Thee I have known, ere yet
Thy lids were kissed from slumber by thy mother.

"'The time has come to quit these swards obscure,
And take high rank in the large world of man.
They who may not be gods,
May yet by aid of gods become immortals.

"'Know me as Hermes! messenger between
Zeus and all life wherein there breathes a soul;
And aught on earth by thee
Coveted most, my power can compass. Listen.'

"Therewith the god extolled the state of kings,
Whose words were laws, whose very looks were fates.
Of heroes, too, he spoke,
Breaking on rock-like breast the surge of battle:

"'Such are the men,' he said, 'who by wise rule
Or peerless deeds have baffled even Styx,
And after death still live
As names on earth, and some as stars in heaven.

"'Of these be one or both,—a Hero-king!'
I answered 'Nay,' and hung my head for shame.
Mildly resumed the god,
Touching my reed, 'Blest, too, life's music-givers!

"And as he spoke, there flashed into his hand
A shell-like instrument, with golden strings:
'They in whose hands this lyre
Speaks to the nations, reign as kings for ever.'

"So saying, carelessly he swept the chords,
And the lyre spoke; spoke as if all the thoughts,
Passions, and powers, and dreams,
Coiled in the brain, or smouldering in the bosom,

" Had found long-pined-for ègress.—As a bird
Caged from its birth content, abruptly hears
One on wings poised in heaven,
Blending with day's its own melodious gladness,

" And wakes at once to sense of light and song;
So, as from space remote, unto my soul
Came the god's music down;
Yet the joy made me weep—I felt my prison.

" When the god ceased, I flung away the reed.
'Give me the lyre,' I said. 'My choice is made.'
He smiled and gave it me;
And to my hand the strings denied all music.

" 'Comfort!' said Hermes, with yet kindlier smile,
'And learn the art now that thou hast the lyre;
Its sound is as the tide
Swelled from a sea wherein have melted rivers.

'To him who makes the lyre interpret life
Innumerous lives coverging sum his own,
Joy, sorrow, hope, and fear,
Banquets and battles, love in calm and tempest,

" 'Pæans of triumph, solemn hymns to Zeus,
Groans wailing up from gulfs in Tartarus,
Meet in the music-shell,
Fashioned by Heaven's wing'd herald for Apollo.

" 'Go, love, and err, and suffer;—hear the sounds,
That clash in dissonance where throng mankind,
And then in grove or grot
Blend all the discords as creation blends them;

" ' And so the lyre becomes creation's voice.'
' Mine not,' I cried in words half choked with tears,
' The gift so dearly bought!
Mine be the music leaflets take from Zephyr,

" ' Or rills from fountains tinkling down their falls;
Born of the mountain Nymph, and reared by Fauns;
Mine be the reed of Pan,
Needing no discords to complete its music!'

" ' Not so,' replied the god, with sterner voice,
' For thou art more than child of mountain nymph;
Thy father treads the heaven,
And thine no lot that levels thee with shepherds.

" ' Meditate destinies of loftier height,
And when thy soul has stored within itself
Thoughts that would snap the reed,
There, where he leads, prepare to follow Hermes.'

" He said, and o'er the sward a silvery cloud
Wavered and rose; the god had passed away;
Then from the grass I snatched
The reed, and kissed and hid it in my bosom.

" And starting from the lyre with swerving spring
As from the baleful beauty of a snake,
I sought, precipitant,
The grot of Pan, deep amid fir-trees hidden.

" And telling him, with many a sob, my tale,
And all my terror, lest compelled to part
With my beloved reed,
On his rough lap he seated me and fondled,

"And with a burly laugh, 'Ho, ho,' quoth he,
'Would Hermes rob me of my foster-son?
Spurns he the pipe that first
Unlocked the melody his skill but mimics?

"'Long ere the earth knew heroes, kings, and wars,
Winds sighed thro' reeds, and Pan and Music were.
Thou must know mortals; true,
But as my pupil; follow me, musician.'

"Then thro' the length of caves he led me on,
Till gained an archway opening on man's world,
And, clear in lusty day,
Meadow and dale and woodland stretched to ocean.

"'Go forth,' he said; 'rove freely at thy will
Where bleat the flocks, where carol the wild birds.
Men, when they hear thy reed,
Shall whisper, "Hark! a new-born sound from
Nature!"'

"So lone I went out into sun-bathed lawns;
And flocks, there nestled, rose and followed me;
Fed on their milk, and fruits,
As, day by day, along my path they mellowed,

"And, couched on moss and wild flowers under stars,
Have I thus lived and shunned the haunts of men,
Yet, lately, being man,
Pined for companion;—I have found thee, sister."

"So then," replied, in pausing long, the Nymph,
"Thou'rt not, as when I heard thee first, I deemed,
Free from the lot of those
Who flit beside my waters into Hades;

"But, bought since man brought death into the world,
The Mother-Nymph transmits not to her son
Her portion in the life
Which beautifies the universe for ever.

"Since it is so, fair youth, companions seek
In those who, conscious of their fleeting hours,
Snatch with impatient hand
At every bud with which an hour may blossom.

"There is no human blood in my pure veins;
There is no human throb in my still heart;
Thou wilt need human love,
The water-spirit loves but as a spirit.

"Nay, hear me farther, and at least be warned
Of what awaits the mortal having won
To his own side at will
One of the Naiad-sisterhood of fountains.

"Who then deserts the partner of his soul
For the warm light in mortal maiden's eye;—
For him, the Eumenides
Make this cold nymph stern as themselves in vengeance.

"Shun, then, my fountain; wake me not again
From the calm depths to which I now return."
And from his side she slid
Melting, as melts a snowflake, in the waters.

The youth went desolate and musing back
Where now from coverts they had sought at noon,
His flock came forth to graze
On pastures cool with shadow from the mountains.

Hesper arose, the shepherd's guardian star,
Bringing the hour when sweetest sounds the reed:
But the flocks wistful stood
Missing the wonted sound; the reed was silent.

And slumber fell not on his lids that night;
The Naiad's face gleamed on him from the stars.
And, at the burst of day,
Again the rash one stood beside the fountain,

Saying, "My soul needs honeyed food from thine,
Bees follow thyme, and all mine instincts thee:
Thy very threat is sweet,
For thou wouldst love me couldst thou stoop to vengeance."

Oft from that morn the awe-stricken herdsmen saw,
When following up steep crags some hardier goat
Strayed from their flocks—below
Seated on mossèd banks, or slowly gliding

Where, with dark pine commingling silvery leaves
Quivered the poplar, side by side two forms;
And in the one they knew
The stranger youth, but who and what the other?

The seasons rolled, and still the Oread's son
Communed, contented, with the Fountain Nymph,
Learning from her kind lips
Mysteries occult, once simple truths in common

To the first race in the wise Golden Age;
Language of bird and beast, and tree and flower,
So passed into his reed
Strains heard by gods ere Zeus yet reigned on Ida.

But when his life waxed from the budding leaf
Into the crown of manhood's regal flower,
Again he felt alone,
And loneliest most when seated by the Naiad.

Now in those parts of Sicily there reigned
An aged king, to whom the fates had spared
But one fair woman-child,
To whose slight hand he half resigned his sceptre.

And she had many suitors; favouring none,
Yet, with a seeming favour, duping all;
Of thoughts and fancies light
As May-leaves wavering between sun and shadow,

And ever seeking after pleasures new,
Settling on phantasies, now gay, now grave,
And quitting each in turn,
Restless as flits the moth beneath the moonbeam.

To this fair princess, Glaucè was her name,
Floated strange stories of the Shepherd youth,
Dwelling apart from men,
With whom he had no language save his music.

And she sent forth her messengers and guards
To track his haunts and bring him to her court,
And, one ill-omened day,
They found and led him to her glittering presence.

And when she gazed upon his blooming face,
Flushed to becoming wrath at violence done,
The heart of Glaucè stirred;
He charmed her eyes, and her eyes sought to charm
him.

Silvering her speech into its blandest tones,
She soothed him, not by language, yet by voice,
And guessing by her signs,
That wish to hear his reed had caused his capture,

Upon the reed he breathed, and music woke;
She, hearing, said, "This melody talks love."
And from her rose-crown took
Bud, newest-blown, and gave it as her answer.

And so, between the music and the flowers,
Language in common grew between the two,
And what was left obscure,
Little by little, eyes soon learned to utter.

And the Nymph's son taught not the mortal maid
The speech of gods: to him her own she taught;
And, with her mortal speech,
Delight in mortal joys which gods might envy.

Captive no more, too willing guest he stayed,
Linking bright moments varied as her whim;
Now, on the noontide sea,
By her sweet side, beneath Egyptian awnings;

Now, at the cool of dawn, on forest-slopes,
Startling the deer in coverts gemmed with dews;
Now, hailing starry night
With Lesbian cups in Lydian dances closing.

As a lark poised in orient heaven forgets
The ripples of the corn-field whence it rose,
Forgets its lowly nest,
And hath no sense of life save joy and glory,

So from the shepherd's soul evanished
His former life; the laurel vale of Pan;
Meek flocks and grassy dales;
And the pale beauty of the fount's calm Spirit.

He in his love-dream, as the lark in heaven,
Hung over time, hushed in the golden hour,
And his god-given reed
Merged all its notes in one voluptuous measure.

One morn, just as the leaflets change their hues,
When great Orion setting threatens ships;
When mists delay the dawn,
And the first snows fall feather-like on hill-peaks;

From that deep slumber following festive hours
Woke the Nymph's son. His chamber stretched between
The silenced banquet-hall
And roofless peristyle, where languid roses

Late lingering, circled a clear fountain-jet
Sent heavenward, breaking, for the flowers around,
All mirror in a wave
Which broke itself to soar above the roses.

At either hand stood open the tall doors,
But partly draped by woofs of Phrygian looms;
And from the morn-lit fount
His eyes turned towards the drearier hall of banquet.

There lay the wrecks of the last night's gone joys,
Goblets cast down: moist wine-stains on dull floors;
Limp blossoms with sick scent,
Kissed from flushed brows away by hardy lovers;

And here and there still struggled thro' the shade
The mournful flicker of a ghastly lamp;
All things of pleasure spoke
As of a life departed speaks a charnel.

And with a shuddering and foreboding chill
The Oread's son recoiled, and bent his looks
Where slumbered by his side,
One white arm round his neck, the Isle-king's daughter;

Her locks of dusky gold streamed wanderingly
From the green tangles of their myrtle crown,
Over the tranquil heave
Of breasts whereon Dione's doves might nestle.

Never, he thought, she looked so beautiful
As in the cold light of that autumn dawn;
And, kissing her closed lips,
He murmured, "Wake, and give my world its morrow!"

And still she slept; then from his neck he loosed
The coil of her soft arms; and her rose-palm
Pressing in his, he cried
In louder tone, "Awake, return these kisses."

And she slept still; then sudden on his soul
There came a sense of some strong Presence dread;
Some Power unseen, unheard,
Filling the space with unconjectured terror.

As when in forest-solitudes a bird
Halts trembling on the spray it lit upon,
Fettered by sudden fear,
Till the snake's eye grows out from the mute covert,

So with blanched cheek, and lifted hair, the youth
Felt an approaching Fate:—Pale from the spray
Of the flower-circled fount
Came gradual forth a slow reluctant image;

And towards him, noiseless, moved the Water Nymph.
Then breaking from his awe, he, with rude hand,
Shook the warm woman-shape
That slumbered at his side, and shrieked "Awake!

"O living partner of my living self,
With human arms shelter my human heart;
She comes—the immortal foe
Of mortal joy!—Love's death is in her aspect!"

Still slept the Princess, still moved on the Nymph,
Moving as moves the wave of a slow tide,
With face serenely sad
In that compassion wherein dwells not mercy;

From her pale lips came, not into his ear,
But to his innermost soul, a ghost-like voice,
Saying, "Accuse me not,
But the Eumenides. Alas my brother!"

And as when some bleak wind from Thracian skies
Suddenly takes into its cold embrace
A flower which Spring too soon
Lures into bloom upon unsheltered Hæmus,

Around his neck there coiled a freezing arm,
And on his eyelids fell a blighting kiss.
Still the fair sleeper slept,
But all the myrtles in her garland shivered.

Back to the fountain noiseless moved the nymph,
As moves the wave when the slow tide recedes;
So from the Oread's son
She and Heaven's sunlight passed; her kiss had blinded.

And Glaucè woke, and clasped him in her arms,
And he said, drearily, "I see thee not!
The beauty of thy bloom
Is lost to me for ever and for ever.

"And with thy beauty so has gone my love,
As a flame burns not when the light is quenched.
This doom is from the gods:
I blame thee not that thou hast brought it on me.

"But, by the memory of fond moments past,
Do what I pray thee; hither call thy slaves,
And let them lead my steps
Back to the place whence I was borne a captive."

Amazed and awed the Princess heard his speech,
Gazing upon the film of lightless eyes
Lately dart-filled with love,
Now blank as quivers vacant of their arrows.

And, sliding from the couch, she called her slaves,
And bade them summon the chief soothsaying priest,
By whose divining lore
Might yet return to those dark eyes her beauty.

The soothsayer came and by the blind man stood,
Closing the chamber from all ears profane,
Questioned, and heard, and mused,
Then left, and, seeking Glaucè, said grave-visaged:

"In breasts immortal direst angers dwell;
Thy charms have won her lover from a Nymph:
Not on thyself draw down
The wrath as yet restricted to the lover.

"Yield to the youth's request, and from these halls
Straightway send forth what kept would work thy woe."
Letting some few tears fall,
The Princess sighed, "Appease we the Immortals."

So the slaves led from out the regal gates,
Back to the lawns shadowed by fading wolds,
Where still his tranquil flocks
Grazed, the blind Shepherd; and there left him friendless.

They left him with his reed in the still noon,
Alone amid the invisible wide world,
Alone, with his sweet reed,
And thro' the invisible wide world thrilled music.

Again the shepherds heard the strain long-missed,
And held their breath to hear; plaintive and low
As is the ringdove's coo
That lulls Pelasgic virgins in Dodona,

The gentle prelude stole to human hearts;
Anon the burden changed, the music swelled.
Joy, sorrow, hope, and fear,
Battles and banquets, love in calm and tempest,

Pæans of triumph, solemn hymns to Zeus,
Groans wailing up from gulfs in Tartarus,
Met in the reed, which Pan,
Ensouling Nature, gave the son of Hermes.

Abrupt the music ceased; with a sharp sigh,
In the unwonted strain the reed had burst,
And the poor blind man stood
Lone on an earth without a link to heaven.

As the swan knows that its completed song
Is its own death-dirge; and, with drooping crest,
Drifts to some shadowy creek,
Where, seen no more, around it close the sedges;

So in the music which had burst his reed,
The blind man felt that he had summed his life;
And, turning towards the West,
As by some hand diviner safely guided,

Adown the rock-path to the Naiad's well,
Sightless he passed, with still unerring tread,
And halted on a ledge;
Void air between his footing and the fountain;

Air, that buoys up the eagle to the sun,
Yet drops an ant that hath not gained its wings;
There standing, the blind man
Lifted his voice, and cried, "Again, lost Sister,

"Speak to me in the language of the gods!
I have lived, I have loved, I have suffered, I have placed
Faith in a broken reed;
There ends man's language as expressed by music.

"Thy kiss hath killed the beauty of all else,
To make thine own more life-like to my soul;
Sister, I see thy face,
See the cool lilies glisten round thy dwelling;

"Where, underneath the waves which know no storm,
Blooms shun the day, and open to the stars;
O take me to thy rest,
Kiss back these lids to light beneath thy waters."

Then all the fount from depth to margent stirred,
And floated up thro' air a silvery voice,
"Child of the Oread, come;
I'll cull my starriest lilies for thy garlands;

"And back to light unearthly kiss thy lids.
Come; on my banks there murmur sweeter reeds
Than breath could ever break,
Needing no discords to complete their music."

"I come," he said, and leapt; pale gleaming arms
Received, and drew him down to azure deeps,
Where, say Sicilian myths,
He and the Nymph form one pure soul for ever.

And later bards revered the Shepherd boy,
As the first sire of Nature-prompted Art;
And by his name is called
The fount where Hermes joined him with the Naiad.

For many an age, with each returning spring,
To him were offered tributary flowers,
And songs which still retained,
In haunted ears, notes from the reed of DAPHNIS.

THE WIFE OF MILETUS.

This story is found in the "Erotics" of Parthenius.

In that dread time when Gaul her ravening swarms
  Launched upon Greece, the Matrons of Miletus,
Honouring the yearly rites of Artemis,
  With songs and offerings, gathered to the temple

That stands unwalled, six stadia from the town;
  And, in the midst of their melodious hymnings,
A barbarous band down from the mountains swooped
  Sudden as swoops on clustered doves the eagle.

When with their spoil the Gauls resought their land,
  Freeing a Greek of rank whom they had captured,
They sent him to Miletus, with these words,
  "The Gauls in war respect the nuptial altars,

"And accept ransom, paid within a year,
  For the fair captives seized within your temple,
Their honour sacred till the year expire,
  But if unransomed then—the slaves of conquest.

"Each Greek, who comes with ransom for his wife,
  Safe as a herald when he cross our borders;
Hervor the Celt, in the Massalian port,
  Will to all seekers give instruction needful."

Milesian husbands heard and answered "Good!"
Yet made no haste to profit by the message.
The way was long, of dire repute the Gaul,
Few foxes trust the honour of the lion;

And, as no sum was fixed, 'twere treasure lost
To take too much—pains lost to take too little.
Among these widowed spouses, one alone,
Xanthus, although his lost delight, Erippe,

Had with no dowry swelled his slender means,
Prized his wife more than misers prize their coffers;
And that the ransom might not fall too short,
He sold his house, his herds, his fields, and vineyards;

And having thus converted into coin
His all, and all compared with her seemed nothing,
He sailed for Gaul to buy the priceless back;
Reaching the seaport founded by Phocæa,

He learnt Erippe's whereabout, and, led
By a Celt guide across the Gaul's wild borders,
Paused at the cone-shaped palace of a chief
Lifted to rule upon the shields of battle.

There, at the door, the Greek beheld his wife
Carding the wool for her barbarian captor.
"Joy, joy!" he cried; "I see thee once again,
Freed—save from love, for I have brought the ransom."

And while, with kisses broken by his sobs,
He clasped her to his breast, out strode the chieftain,
Roused by strange voices and his barking dogs.
Head taller than the rest; his long locks yellowing

The cold clear air, with undulating gleam;
His ample front serene with power unquestioned,
A wolf's-hide mantle for his robe of state;
In his right hand a boar-spear for a sceptre.

Already versed in the barbarian tongue,
Erippe, breaking from her lord's embraces,
Said—"Lo my husband! he hath crossed the seas,
And brought, if thou accept it still, my ransom."

The Gaul looked down a moment; the wolf's hide
Stirred with a fuller swell of his strong life-blood;
Then raising the clear light of his blue eyes,
He stretched his vast hand o'er the brows of Xanthus;

"Sacred," he said, "are marriage and man's hearth;
Pass through these doors, a guest; the guest is sacred."
The guide by Hervor lent, as one who know
The Grecian tongue, explained these words to Xanthus;

For here, as if by joy or by surprise
Quite overcome, Erippe trembled voiceless,
And, when her lord's eye sought her, she was gone,
Lost in the inner labyrinths of that dwelling.

The Gaul placed meats and mead before his guest,
To whom, when thus refreshed, he spoke—"Milesian,
Thou com'st in time while yet the promised year
Lacks a brief moon of the completed circle;

"Had the year lapsed—the woman's face is fair,
And I am wifeless—haply I had loved her.
Enough—now tell me what thy worldly wealth,
And what proportion thou wouldst yield as ransom?"

Speaking thus thro' the interpreter, the Greek
Thro' the interpreter replied, "My father,
Tho' nobly born, left me but scanty lands;
These I have sold in haste at no slight losses.

"A thousand golden staters have I brought."
More had he said, the Gaul cut short the sentence.
"Hold there; I see thine is no niggard soul:
That which thou gainest, and I yield, has value

"To be assessed according as it seems
Singled from millions, as the world's one woman;
'Tis all or nought. Thou wouldst concede thine all;
I can take naught: the fourth part is my people's,

"The rest our law makes mine—I give it back.
Go, tell thy wife she is no more my captive,
The morrow's sun shall light ye homeward both."
Then by a stern-faced handmaid to the chamber,

Where his wife waited him, the Greek was led,
And left to tell Erippe his glad tidings.
"How the gods favour me! A kiss!" he cried.
"Had adverse winds delayed my Cyprian galley

"This wolf-skin wearer says he might have loved,
And made thee—horror!—wife of a barbarian.
But be we just! the savage hath a soul
Not found among the traffickers of Hellas;

"And of the thousand staters I proposed,
Takes but a fourth; small ransom for Erippe."
She, curious as her sex, then made her lord
Tell, word by word, all Greek and Gaul had uttered;

And having heard, cried, "Thou hast lost us both:
I know how void thy chest; a thousand staters!
Thou canst not have the tenth of such a sum,
And when the Gaul detects thee in this falsehood—"

"Hush," said the husband, "I have sold our all,
Our house, our herds, our cornfields, and our vineyards;
I named one thousand staters to the Gaul,
Meaning to add, but his impatience stopped me,

"'That sum is half my all,—the other half
Is also here, sewed up in my slaves' garments;
If half suffice not, take the whole!' These Gauls
Guess not the price at which we Greeks rate beauty.

"What! coy as ever? Well, I love thee so!"
At early dawn, while yet her Xanthus slumbered,
She who had slept not, slipping from his side,
Donned her silk robe, and sleeked her amber tresses;

And stole, light-footed, to the outer door,
Where, as she knew his wont, with eyes fixed eastward,
To greet his shrineless Helios, stood the Gaul.
Starting he turned, quick-eared, to her fine footfall;

His eyes met hers—were hers, then, danger-fraught,
That in his strong right hand the spear-staff trembled?
"Seekest thou me?" he said. "Yea, thee!" "Alone!
Where is thy lord?" "Still slumbering in yon chamber."

"What wouldst thou?" "Hist! a secret. Bend thine ear,
Nor let thine aspect lose its wonted kindness.
Know my base husband has deceived thee, Gaul.
Sewn in the garments of his slaves is twofold

"The sum he proffered. Take that gold and me!
For him I loathe and thee I love. O master,
Thou wouldst have loved me had not this man come;
He for his falsehood merits death: so be it!

"Let one life cease to stand between us two!"
As she thus spoke, the Gaul his wolf-hide mantle
Plucked o'er his visage with a sudden hand,
And from that vail his voice with hollow murmur

Came to her ear. "Is it thy true thought speaks?
Mine the wife's love, and mine the husband's murder?"
"If it be murder to chastise a fraud,
Love, to reach love, is a divine destroyer."

He raised his looks, in wonder that the Gods,
While hating Evil, clothed it in such beauty;-
And whispered, "Is thy husband not my guest?
Let me forget that thou hast said this horror,

"Wearing a face in which, were I thy lord,
Singled from millions, blooms the world's one woman.
Touch me not, speak not, for thy touch and word
Alike are fire.—Gods of the brave, forgive me,

"For I do think that what I feel is fear."
So he shook off the hands that clasped his mantle,
And, striding thro' the doorway, left her lone.
But she, more bent on crime by his rejection,

And gladdening, 'mid her shame, to feel her power,
Smiled and said, "Ah! he loves me, and I conquer;
Hath he not owned my words and touch are fire?"
Back to the chamber where yet slept the husband

Snake-like she crept, and cut on yielding wax
Words deep enough for pathway into Hades.
Seeking with Grecian sophistry of guile,
To dupe the rudeness of barbarian reason,

She wrote, "Thy guest be sacred in thy realm,
But at thy borders guest returns to debtor,
And if the debtor by a lie repay
The generous creditor's large-souled concession,

"What stings to wrath the generous like deceit?
Conduct us to the frontier; there give orders
To search the garments of the Grecian slaves;
The fraud exposed becomes thy clear acquittal

"With gods and men, for that which sets me free;
The vilest slavery is a hated wedlock.
We Grecian women do not choose our mates.
Blessèd our lot if loving him who chooses;

"If not, a life-long pining;—better death!
But death to whom—the prisoner or the gaoler?
We should be prophets could we but divine
If the strange breast whereon our simple childhood,

"Torn from its stem, is tortured into graft,
Hath life-sap healthful to our growth as woman.
A man was found to wed me without dower,
He sells his all to purchase back his bargain;

"Never asked that man 'Has this thing a heart?'
Content if deeming that the thing has beauty,
Saying 'I love,' but not 'Canst thou love me?'
Love is no deity except when twin-born,

"Sprung from two hearts, each yearning unto each,
Until they meet, though Hades yawned between them.
Thou art to me the world's one man, and I
For good or ill, to thee the world's one woman."

This writ, she took the tablets to a youth,
Who, as the Gallic chieftain's buckler-bearer,
Stood readiest to his hest at feast or fight,
And bade him seek and give them to his master.

The sun paused midway between morn and eve
When the shield-bearer brought his chieftain's answer,
Saying, "I wait to lead thee and thy lord
Along the wastes and woodland to our borders."

She, with a dreadful joy in this reply,
Cried to her husband, "Hasten our departure;
The Gaul is chafed that we so long delay."
A little while, and thro' the mountain gorges

Shadowing the sun, the slow procession moved.
Heading his chosen guard stalked first the Chieftain
Followed the slaves; gay Xanthus, in their rear,
Carolling bird-like to his silent nest-mate.

The sun set reddening as they reached the stream
Which would belt Gaul, did her fierce heart brook
girdle;
A grassy semicircle stretched between
The hurrying wave and the unmoving forest;

Grey, in the midst of that lone waste-land, stood
A block of stone rude as man's earliest altar.
Here paused the Gaul, and as the rest grouped round,
One of the guard brought to the chief, as victim,

A lamb all filleted with wilding flowers,
And the lamb meekly licked the hand that led it.
Then said the chief to Xanthus, who drew near
With a Greek's interest, curious, and yet scornful;

Slow-speaking, that the guide-interpreter
Might make each sentence clearer to the stranger,
"When, at the boundary of his land, the Gaul
Parts from the guest or settles with the debtor,

"His law enjoins a sacrifice to gods,
Who make him safe thro' strength and strong thro' honour,
Thus guest or debtor goes his homeward way
By holy rites secured from deadly ambush;

"Granting that guest or debtor forfeit not
By his own sin our father-land's protection.
For times have been when in the guest himself
The gods who guard our borders chose the victim:

"My grandsire here slew one—a smooth-tongued Greek,
False to his host—the accusing voice was woman's:
But this need scare not men revering truth.
Now while thy slaves complete thy share of barter,

"Which was of all thy worldly wealth the fourth;
Let thy fair wife—restored to gods of Hellas—
Pay her last homage to the gods of Gaul,
And hold the lamb, which is the spotless symbol

"Of hearts that pray to be as pure from guile,"
Construing these words by her dark hopes, Erippe
Bent o'er the lamb, her white arm round its neck;
Whispered the Gaul, "Shall I not spare thy husband?

"Does thy heart fail? it is not yet too late."
Hissed her voice, "Nay, let him who parts us perish!
Could thy heart fail thee, mine, at least, is firm:
This weak hand strong enough to strike a sleeper;

"This slight foot swift enough to fly the dead;
Spare him to-day—dismiss me; with the morrow
I should regain thy side, and whisper 'Freed!'
Wouldst thou have courage to refuse me shelter?"

To the still heaven the Gaul upraised his sword,
And crying, "Gods, this offering to man's hearth-
stone,"
He smote: the lamb ran bleating from the stone;
To Acheron sighless passed a guiltier victim.

Flinging to Xanthus, rooted horror-spelled,
The fatal lines that wooed, and brought home, murder,
The Doomsman said—"When thy guide construes these,
Thank him who saved his guest from deadly ambush

"Take all thy gold. I have paid my people; how,
Their bards will teach them at inviolate hearthstones.
Thou hast no cause to grieve; but I—but I,
O Greek, I loved her; I have slain Temptation."

And, as when, passing from the wrecks it doomed,
Desolate sets, in deeps of cloud, Orion,
The grand destroyer went his way forlorn
Thro' glimmering darkness down barbarian forests.

BRIDALS IN THE SPIRIT LAND.

The original of this Myth is to be found in Conon, Narrat. 18 (where Leonymus is named Autoleon), and in Pausanias, iii. 19.

MANY wonders on the ocean
By the moonlight may be seen.
Under moonlight, on the Euxine
Rose the blessed silver Isle,

As Leonymus of Croton,
At the Pythian god's behest,
Steered along the troubled waters
To the tranquil Spirit-land.

In the earthquake of the battle,
When the Locrians reeled before
Croton's shock of marching iron,
Strode a phantom to their van.

'Twas the shade of Locrian Ajax,
Guarding still the native soil;
And Leonymus, confronting,
Wounded, fell before the spear.

Leech and herb the wound could heal not.
Said the Pythian god, "Depart,
Voyage o'er the troubled Euxine
To the tranquil Spirit-land;

"There abides the Locrian Ajax;
He who gave the wound can heal:
God-like souls are in their mercy
Stronger yet than in their wrath."

White it rose on lullèd waters,
Rose the blessed silver Isle;
Purple vines in lengthened vistas
Knit the hill-top to the beach;

And the beach had sparry caverns,
And a floor of golden sands;
And wherever soared the cypress,
Underneath it bloomed the rose.

Glimmered there amid the vine-leaves,
Thoro' cavern, over beach,
Life-like shadows of a beauty
Which the living know no more;

Towery statures of great heroes,
They who fought at Thebes and Troy;
And, with looks that poets dream of,
Beamed the women heroes loved.

Stately out before their comrades,
As the vessel touched the shore,
Came the stateliest two, by Hymen
Ever hallowed into one.

As He strode, the forest trembled
To the awe that crown'd his brow;
As She stepped, the ocean dimpled
To the ray that left her smile.

"Fearless warrior, welcome hither!"
Said a voice in which there slept
Thunder-sounds to scatter armies
As a north-wind scatters leaves.

"Wounded sufferer, welcome hither!"
Said a voice of music, low
As the coo of doves that nestle
Under summer boughs at noon.

"Who are ye, O shapes of glory?"
He, the Hero-Ghost replied,
"She is Helen, I Achilles,
In the Spirit-land espoused."

"Low I kneel to thee, Pelides;
But, O marvel, she thy bride,
She whose guilt unpeopled Hellas,
She whose marriage lights fired Troy!"

Frowned the large front of Achilles,
Casting shadow o'er the place,
As the sunlight fades from Tempè,
When on Ossa hangs a storm.

"Know, thou dullard," said Pelides,
"That on the funeral pyre,
Earthly sins are purged from glory,
And the Soul is as the Name.

"If to her in life a Paris;
If to me in life a slave,
Helen's mate is here Achilles—
Mine the Sister of the Stars.

"Nought of her survives but beauty.
Nought of me survives but fame;
Fame and Beauty wed together
In the isle of happy souls."

O'er the foam of warring billows
Silver-chimed the choral song.
"Fame and Beauty wed for ever
In the isle of happy souls."

"Wounded sufferer, welcome hither,
Thou hast reached us, thou art cured;
Healed is every wound of mortal,
In the isle of happy souls."

O'er the gloom of moaning waters
Soft and softer chimed the song,
"Healed is every wound of mortal
In the isle of happy souls."

CYDIPPE;

OR, THE APPLE.

The very beautiful legend of "Cydippe and the Apple" was a favourite with both Greek and Latin writers. Callimachus wrote a poem (now lost) called "Cydippe," and we still retain the Epistles between Acontius and Cydippe in the Heroides of Ovid, though whether Ovid himself composed them is a matter of some dispute. Scaliger assigns their authorship to Sabinus, a contemporary and friend of Ovid's. In our own day, the main incident of the subject has been treated by Mr. Charles Kent, in hexameter verses rich with exquisite imagery and beauties of poetic expression. (See "The Golden Apple," in the charming volume of poems by Charles Kent, entitled "Alethcia: or The Doom of Mythology.") In the more matter of fact mode in which the legend is here told, the original plot has been somewhat amplified, and the vengeance of Artemis extended from Cydippe to her father, and one of her suitors.

FAIREST and hardiest of the youths in Ceos
Flourished Acontius free from love's sweet trouble,
Pure as when first a child, in her child-chorus,
Chanting the goddess of the silver bow.

Him silent rocks and shadowy glens delighted,
Where the roe fled into the realm of eagles,
Or where the red eye of the lurking wild-boar
Gleamed thro' some crevice in dense forest leaves.

"Son," thus his father, widowed long, and aged,
Mournfully said, "The young are never lonely;
Solitude's self to them is a boon comrade;
Lone are the aged; lone amid the crowd,

"Loneliest when brooding o'er a silent hearthstone
Vacant of prattlers coaxing back to laughter:
Toys to the greybeard are his children's children;
They are to age, my son, as hopes to youth.'

"Choose, then, a bride whom I may call a daughter,
And in her infants let me find companions.
Life hurries on to meet the point it sprung from;
Youth starts from infancy and age returns."

Moved much, Acontius heard, and said submissive:—
"Thy will my law shall ever be, O father.
But as my childhood served the solemn goddess,
Haunting lone souls estranged from human love,

"And she, since then, has made the smile of woman
Fall on my heart as falls on snow the moonbeam,
So the great Queen herself must lift the shadow
Cast by her marble image o'er my life.

"Go will I straight with offerings to her temple,
Praying her leave to make thy home less lonely."
Gently he kissed the old man's bended forehead,
Quitting the threshold with reluctant steps.

And the next day he stood before the father,
Saying, "The goddess, thro' her priest, our kinsman,
Gives me this riddle, baffling my dull reason;
Wisdom is thine, my father, read and solve."

"There," read the father, "where her shrine is chastest,
Artemis orders him who would forsake her.
This is no riddle," said the old man sadly,
"Artemis dooms thee to some Northern shrine,

"Where to her priesthoods marriage rites are sinful—
Patience! The gods are of all joy the givers;
And by the side of Sorrow, when they send her,
Place Resignation! Child, I will not grieve!"

Tears on his eyelids, from the old man's presence,
Went the son wandering listless toward the seashore;
Nearing the city-gates, quick crowds swept by him:
"Whither so fast?" he asked of one he knew.

"Whither, Acontius? yonder, to the haven,
Ere our State galley sail to wealthy Delos.
Why art thou not on board?" I am no merchant,
What to me Delos? not a wildboar there!"

"Dullard, forget'st thou the blithe yearly feast-days,
Honouring the Delian Deities; Apollo,
And the great Artemis, who holds her eldest
Shrine, and her chastest, in her natal isle?"

Started Acontius, and his breath came quickly.
"Thanks; for thy words remind me of a duty;
Haste we, I hear the music giving signal
Of the raised anchor: Friend, when I am gone,

"Seek thou my father, say why I am absent;
Cheer him; stay,—bid him broach his oldest Chian,
And—thou and I were playmates in our childhood,
Drink to my health, the old man then will share!"

Promised the other; he loved well Acontius,
All men in Ceos loved the hunter's father.
Talking thus as they went, behold, the haven,
And the sun glittering on the festive ship

Rainbowed from prow to stern with votive garlands.
In sprang the hunter; blithe began the boat-song;
Freighted with youth and garland-blooms, the galley
Slided from land adown the glassy sea.

Gaining the shores of consecrated Delos,
Port, mart, and street seem'd vocal with all Hellas,
And the whole city, as one mighty altar,
Breathed with Greek melodies and Syrian balms.

Wistful the hunter eyed the long procession,
Solemn with delegates from troubled cities,
Bearing those gifts by which a State in peril
Deems it wise piety to bribe the gods.

"Not now at midday," inly said Acontius,
"Merged in grand embassies of tribes and races
To the Queen-goddess, can I hope her favour
For the petition of one humble man.

"Therefore, since unprepared I came from Ceos,
Will I, this eve, buy white robes and feast-off'rings,
Spend night in prayer, unroofed beneath the moonlight,
And ere the city, from the leaden sleep

"Following long revel, opens drowsy lids,
Will I be first at dawn to seek the goddess,
Waiting not till the din of countless suitors
Tire ov'n the patience of celestial ears."

Quitting the crowd that poured into the temple,
All that bright feast-day, strayed the simple hunter,
Lone by the sea-shore, till in rosy twilight
Melted the outlines vague of wave and sky:

Pale from the altar rose the last thin vapour,
Evening's gay banquet closing day's grave worship;
Still the wide mart stood open for all stragglers;
Barber-shops loud with the last moment's news;

Wine-booths; stalls gay with wares for every stranger,
Gifts for his gods or playthings for his infants;
Singing girls skilled in songs for every lover;
Tale-tellers moving laughter, sometimes tears;

Vagrant diviners known not to Apollo,
Promising riches unrevealed to Plutus;
Swarthy barbarians—Æthiop, Mede, Egyptian,
Yellow-haired Celt from Hyperborean seas,

Attica's parasite and Thracia's robber
All seeking gain or pleasure—blessed the temple,
Which now in silence, seen above the roof-tops,
Rose, the calm well-head of the noisy mart.

Tall thro' the press broad-shouldered moved the hunter,
And, 'mid the stalls singling a face that pleased him,
Bought the things needful for his simple off'rings.
Quoth she who served him, from the Naxian isle

Laughing-eyed good-wife—"Comely-visaged stranger,
Take thou this fruit, the fairest in my orchard;
And may the cheek of her to whom it passes
Glow with a blush yet warmer than the fruit's."

Smiling the hunter sighed; and took the apple,
Gift which the Greek gives her he deems the fairest.
Then, where serene in starlight rose the temple,
Upward he went, and left the mart below.

In the hushed grove around the sacred columns,
All the night long he watched the silvery tree-tops
Opening still pathways to the moon;—till faintly
Through the leaves sighing crept the winds of dawn;

Reddened the hazy sea; a golden glimmer
Shot from day's car and woke the lark; Narcissus
Lifted his dew-gemmed coronal of clusters;
Shy peered the lizard from the crannied wall.

Now from within the fane rose choral voices,
Hymning the advent of the world's joy-bringer;
Now up the sacred stairs went slow the hunter;
Now with innumerous torches on his sight,

Column on column lengthening, blazed the temple,
Life-like, thus seen, stood out the marble goddess,
Beauteous in scorn as when she slew Orion.
First with due care besprinkling breast and hands

From the lustrating font within the entrance,
Murmuring low prayer Acontius neared the altar,
Rendering his bloodless sacrifice—pure flour-cakes,
Shapes wrought in way of lion and of stag,

Poppy wreaths blushing round a stem of olive.
Homage thus paid, awhile he lingered, gazing
On the stern beauty of the solemn goddess;
Reverently then he turned him to depart.

Lo, midway in the aisle—her nurse before her
Mother-like walking—came a youthful virgin
Bearing white garlands, as when, led by winter,
Comes the fresh Spring-morn bringing earliest flowers.

Quiet and slow, with modest eyes cast downward,
Noting the hunter not, she glided by him;
Silent she took her place beside the altar,
Brightening its flame with balms from Araby

And the reflected light of her own beauty;
And at the first sight of that stranger maiden
Leapt the youth's heart, and from it the cold goddess
Lifted the shadow since his childhood cast.

As in closed chambers suddenly flung open
Rushes the light, rushes the golden splendour,
All his frame thrilled with a celestial glory,
And to himself he murmured "This is love."

Quickly, as by some inward voice instructed,
No other votaries sharing yet the temple,
While she, unheeding aught beyond the altar,
Over her offering bent her looks devout,

He, with his hunter's knife, carved on the apple
Letters clear-scored; and, screened behind a column,
Into the maiden's lap he cast that token
Which the Greek gives to her he deems most fair.

Startled, the girl looked round; nor saw the hunter,
And, wonder-stricken, asked the nurse in whisper,
"What can this mean? whence comes it?" Quoth the woman,
Puzzled and curious—"Nay, I cannot guess.

"Are there not letters? read thou what is written."
So the girl read these words, "I, at the altar
Artemis hallows, vow to wed Acontius."
With the sweet blush of angry innocence,

Scornful the maiden cast away the apple;
But, tho' in whisper she the words had spoken,
Heard by the Cean, heard by the great goddess.
"Joy!" said the lover, suddenly grown bold,

"Gold-throned Artemis, to thee unerring
Trust I the rest; the vow is in thy keeping."
When the girl, down-eyed as before, departed,
He, through the city, followed on her way,

Mute and unmarked and faithful as her shadow,
Till her light footfall on the parent-threshold
Left its last music. Learning from the neighbours
All that he asked, her parentage and name,

Longer the Cean tarried not in Delos;
Took a light boat, recrossed the sunny waters,
And, his home reaching, greeted thus his father:
"Make the house ready to receive a bride,

"For she is found: thy hearth shall not be lonely."
And so, tho,' waking or in sleep, re-haunted
By that sweet face, he trusted to the goddess,
Strong in the patience which is born of hope.

This blooming maid of Delos, named Cydippe,
Was the sole child of Megacles, the Archon,
Courted by many, but to all yet heart-whole;
Now from the suitors making his own choice,

Megacles singled the great merchant, Chremes;
She, in whose mind the vow was as a circle
Traced in calm water by the halcyon dipping,
Child in submission to her father's will,

Neither inclined, nor yet averse, consented:
When, but three days before the appointed bridals,
Wondered the nurse that yet Cydippe slumbered
While not a dewdrop lingered on the rose;

Nearing the couch, she shrieked aloud in terror:
Colourless, calmly rigid, lay the maiden
As if not sleep, but sleep's more awful brother
With the quenched torch, reigned stern in that repose.

Locked in this trance, only by breath the faintest,
Showing a soul not vanished from the sunlight,
Lay she for weeks as if on life's last border
Touching the silent shadow-land beyond.

Said the cold merchant to the grieving father,
"Pardon me, friend, a wife is the house-mistress,
Ill fares the house if she indulge in trances.
Give back my love-gifts and annul the bond."

Proudly the Archon smiled and tore the contract.
Chremes soon found a bride with fits less quiet;
Then from her trance, fresh as from wonted slumber,
Bloomed out the maid, and stood amid the flowers.

Megacles now, sore-smarting at the insult
Put on his child by the coarse-thoughted merchant,
Out from her suitors chose a grand Eupatrid,
Grave as an Ephor schooling Spartan kings;

Scorning mankind as sprung from bone and sinew,
While from the stones with which Deucalion peopled
Thessaly's mud-banks, after the great deluge,
Vaunting his antique petrified descent.

Still from rock itself will grow the blossom ;
One day the stone-born chanced to see Cydippe,
And in some fissure of that flinty bosom,
Love found an opening for his thorny rose.

Just as before, averse not nor inclining,
Pleased with the love-gifts, heeding not the giver,
Pious Cydippe passively consented,
Child in submission to her father's will.

Lo now reversed the mystic visitation!
Her the trance spared and settled on the suitor;
Nine drowsy days the Eupatrid lay as stone-like
As his first father ere transformed to man.

When he returned to consciousness and reason,
Thus, to the Archon bending o'er his pillow
Gravely he whispered, "I have been in Hades,
Sojourning there with the majestic ghost

"Of my line's founder, the Thessalian pebble,
And he forbade me—but his words are sacred,—
Pity my fate; I dare not wed thy daughter.
Keep thou my love-gifts and annul the bond."

Homeward returning, Megacles self-communed,
Muttering, "Some god is mixed up in this matter.
Twice may my choice have angered Aphroditè.
Is not my daughter beautiful and young?

"Should not her proper mate be youth and beauty?
Squint-eyed the merchant; grey the stone-descended;
Like unto like! had Helen married Paris,
She had been chaste, and Troy be standing now."

So his choice settled soon upon Callistus,
Slender as Hermes, blooming as Apollo.
Never, since Paris, with a blander aspect
Guest at man's hearthstone left behind him woe.

"Surely this choice will please thee, Aphroditè,"
Megacles said, "And here will be no trances."
Neither inclining nor averse, Cydippe,
Child in submission to her father's will,

Glanced at her fair-faced suitor, and consented.
But, O the marvel! now it was the father
Whom the strange torpor wrapped from golden day-
light:
Nine dreary weeks, where life's last border touched

On the dim shadow-land, he lay unmoving.
Goaded by debt, and pining for a dowry,
Thus to the maid said elegant Callistus,
"All men are mortal—thy good father's dead;

"Motionless, speechless, eating not nor drinking;
Weeping I say it, no man can be deader;
Sinful it is to keep him still unburied,
Staying from Fields of Asphodel his ghost.

"Let thy soft heart dismiss too pious scruples.
Mourn for thy father—place him on the death-pyre,
Hastening the moment when, extinct his ashes,
Love may to Hymen dedicate the torch."

Stern looked the girl, till then so meek; replying,
"Get thee gone, counsellor of household murder."
Thus for the third time Artemis preserved her
Faithfully true to the forgotten vow.

Now the strange story of these three strange trances
Lip to lip flew thro' wonder-loving Hellas,
And at the Archon's door, one noon in summer,
Knocking, a stranger slow admittance found.

Led by a house-slave to Cydippe's presence,
Thus, with grave aspect, he addressed the maiden:
"Daughter of Megacles, I, Greek, though stranger,
Come, a disciple of the healing god,

"Pledging my head to free thy father's spirit
From the dread sleep which drags it on to Léthé,
Grant me but leave to see him." Slowly lifting
Sorrowful lids, she gazed upon a brow

Seeming, she thought, the throne of modest candour.
Trustful she said, "The gods confirm thy promise!"
Leading him straight into her father's chamber.
O'er the death-sleep the stranger bent awhile;

Taking the hand, thrice breathing on the eyelids,
Softly he whispered, "Soul, that thro' the slumber
Still lives the same, as when, from sight evanished,
Moves not the less thro' sunlit space a star;

"What is the Power that weighs thee to the shadows
With the dire load of some diviner anger?
Speak, who the God, and what the expiation?"
Murmured the slumberer through unmoving lips,

"Artemis smites me; wherefore, ask Apollo."
Silence resettled on the lips unmoving;
Then to Cydippe, turning, asked the stranger,
"Is it thy will that I these words obey?"

"Blest be thy coming," she sobbed forth. "O haste!
Hear I thy voice again, O father, father!"
Slow from her presence passed away the stranger,
Passed into sunlight, leaving her in prayer;

And, with her nurse and others of the household,
Went with peace-offerings to Apollo's temple,
And, when the sacred oracle had answered,
Led the procession back to that still couch.

"Comfort!" he said, and smiled, to the good daughter;
Over the sleeper then he lightly sprinkled
Drops from Apollo's font, imbibed by vervain,
And the lids opened, and the man sate up,

Wonderingly stared on kneeling forms around him,
Wonderingly heard a choir of household voices,
"Praise to the healing-god!—our master liveth:
"Praise to Apollo!" "To Apollo, praise!"

"Praise too his huntress-sister," said the stranger,
"Guardian with him of consecrated Delos:
Learn, noble Megacles, and thou, Cydippe,
Wherefore the anger of the Delian Powers.

"Thus saith the Oracle—those kneeling round thee
Heard it, O Archon—'Are not all vows holy?
Did not Cydippe vow to wed Acontius,
And at the solemn shrine of Artemis?'"

Suddenly then the fatal words, forgotten
As a dream's fragments, started up accusing
On the girl's mind; mute to her father's questions,
Cowering she stood, bowed down by grief and shame.

Pained for her darling, out the nurse spoke shrill-tongued,
Guiltless the girl, but criminal the apple,
"Peace!" cried the Archon—"who is this Acontius?"
Answered the stranger, "Well-born, young, a Cean;

"With but one merit—that he loves thy daughter,
Loved her at first sight—Artemis so willed it."
"Bow we to Artemis!" exclaimed the father,
"Quick, and to Ceos send the swiftest ship.

"Tarry here, stranger, welcome at this hearthstone.
Hast thou not saved its owner from the Shadows?
Tarry at least till comes the eager bridegroom,
Fathers are safe not till their daughters wed."

Tarried the stranger, golden days of summer:
Daily and hourly, darker yet and darker,
Standing between the girl and daylight, Sorrow.
She who till then had to her father's will,

Child in submission, bent without a murmur,
Inly rebelling, loathed these fated bridals,
Never so galled as when she heard the stranger
Palliate the guile which had ensnared her vow.

Stifling her wrath she marked his tranquil aspect
When the slaves decked the walls with nuptial garlands;
And while she marked, his eyes her own were seeking,
Seeking there light the sun could not bestow.

Late on the night before the dreaded morning
Fixed for the coming of the hated bridegroom,
Bold in despair she knelt, before her father,
Weepingly knelt, and faltered forth these words:

"If my lost mother loved thee, if from childhood
I have obeyed and honoured thee, O father,
Hear me, nor slay with these detested bridals.
Rather O let me the cold goddess serve

"All my life long, as her pure virgin priestess,
So may she free me from a vow less sinful
Broken, than kept abhorring him who snared it.
Never can love dwell between me and fraud."

"Hold," cried the Archon; "nor incense a goddess
Who into Hades can entrance thy father;
Rail not at fraud—all maidens pray for lovers,
Warned tho' they be that love itself is fraud."

Back to her chamber crept the girl heart-broken,
Sate in the dark and moaned herself to slumber.
Gaily the ship, at morn, rode in the haven,
Flute and fife chiming to the dip of oars;

And the old, kind-faced father of the bridegroom,
Heading a train of friends and slaves gift-bearing,
Came to the house, where Megacles received him,
Standing at doorposts garlanded with rose.

Friendly the old men talked and laughed together;
Side by side marching came they to Cydippe:
Where was Acontius? where the guileful lover?
Where, too, the stranger, absent since the dawn?

Veiled was the girl; the bridal wreath of myrtle
Rent from her brow beneath her feet lay trampled;
Hidden her face, yet visible her anguish,
Bride with the myrtle trampled under foot.

Look, maiden, look! what image kneels before thee?
Hear, maiden, hear! what voice recalls thy blushes?
"I am Acontius, whom thou hast so hated—
I am the stranger; is he hated too?

"Snare for thy hand sufficed not to my treason;
And in thy heart I set the snare for pardon;
Here have I failed? if so, thou hast thy freedom;
I can release thee, maiden—I can die."

Bending she took up and replaced the myrtle,
Not with the right hand; that in his was resting;
And as, heard never save by gods and lovers,
Heart answers heart, she answered, yet was mute.

So with melodious hymnings to the temple
Went the procession; and in after ages
This story passed into a strain of music
Set for sweet singers, and to Lesbian lutes.

Youth, mayst thou ever at the chastest altar
Fix thy heart's choice on her thou deem'st the fairest,
And may the goddess ever keep unbroken
Vows on the apple read by virgins there.

THE END.

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